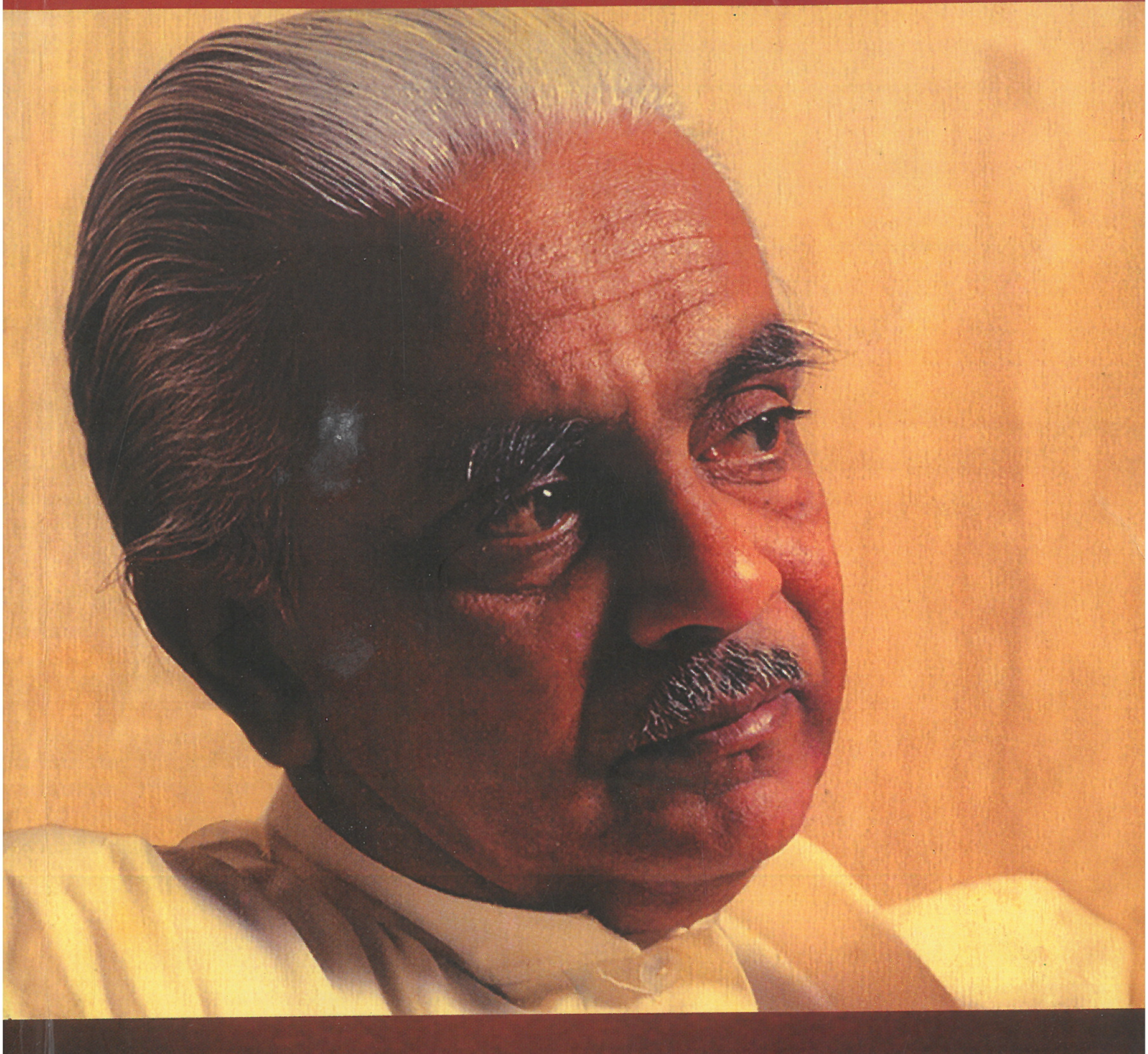
A. T. Ariyaratne



BHAVA THANHA

Vol. 2

An Autobiography

Bhava Thanha

An Autobiography

Volume : II
(1972-1985)

A.T. Ariyaratne

Reading 'Bhava Thanha' without a pause entails no cumbersome mental exercise. I make this pronouncement as one who had read both volumes of 'Bhava Thanha'. The second volume is even more sensational, for through it the gigantic Dr. Ariyaratne encased in a small frame emerges frequently.

A procession of characters parades through its pages as Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero, Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, Rohana Wijeweera, Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai, Presidents J.R. Jayewardene, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, Peter Pabst, Bhagawan Sathya Shri Sai Baba, Dr. James P. Grant and Kanagarajan Kadiramalai. His dealings with these characters here and abroad are indeed intricate – a blend of co-operation, of clash and of confrontation. Finally he has compassion for them all.

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne admits that he is not a professional writer. Hence the book if pruned more and re-moulded would have been non-presentable.

But the outstanding feature in the text is that one can read it almost non-stop. That is a quality that endears any book especially a biography.

Hence it is a book that everybody should read for through it, the author takes us on a voyage from 'The known to the unknown and from unknown to the known'.

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BHAVA THANHA

An Autobiography

Volume : 2
(1972 - 1985)

A.T. Ariyaratne

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Mrs. Padma Edirisinghe
for translating most parts of this book from Sinhala.

A.T.A.

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I dedicate the second volume of Bhava Thanha
with respectful fervour to the sacred name of
Venerable prelate, Panditha Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero,
Anunayaka Thero of the Ramanna Sect who invested the last decade
of his exemplary life in the cause of Sarvodaya.

Foreword

The first volume of the autobiography, "Bhava Thanha" made its debut on March 18, 2001 at Colombo Sugathadasa Stadium. This is the second volume.

The first volume comprised 98 chapters, 600 plus pages and 405 photographs. My dream was to have this book published in the three languages ie. Sinhala, Tamil and English and release them simultaneously. If I can materialize this objective I felt that yet another service of mine would be fulfilled.

It is easy to dream but difficult to concretize them to realities. Yet if a certain group decides to assemble around a worthy cause and work steadfast at it any dream can be concretized. Since I was a member of such a group my dream was fulfilled.

Mr. Cyril Ekanayake, President of Vishva Lekha and its Managing Director, Mr. Susiri de Silva undertook the responsibility of printing the book while Mr. Piyasena Wickremage, volunteered to be in charge of the proof reading of the Sinhala manuscripts and then hand them over duly for printing. Mrs. Padma Edirisinghe did a splendid job of translating the Sinhala manuscript into English and Mr. Gopal Shanker handled the Tamil translation. Advocate Mr. Mariappan and Dr. Pat Masters and Mr. Rick Brooks undertook the proof reading.

Mr. Deva Raju, Mrs. Sujatha Lopez, Miss Champa Irani and Mr. Lakmal De Silva attended to the computerizing work involved. Various others helped in varied ways that finally culminated with the production of 12000 books by the dawn of March 18, 2001.

The junior members of Sarvodaya were of the view that the launch of this book should be done in a simple ceremony minus extravagance yet retaining the significant and historical dimensions of the event. As I always honour the opinions of this upcoming group I concurred while insisting on one condition i.e. that they should bear the full responsibility of the launch. It was they who decided to insert my photograph on the cover page.

A Committee headed by Executive Director, Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, Deputy Executive Director Dr. Harsha Liyanage, Vice

Presidents P. Hewavitharana and Subasena De Silva, Kalapathi Bertram Nihal, Kalasuri Sarath Surasena handled the reins of the mass of work involved. Bertram Nihal composed a 40 minute video film based on the first volume. Kalasuri Rajini Selvanayagam presented a magnificent dance pageant using the talents of hundreds of young dancers, dramatists and drummers. Member of Parliament and Kalasuri Mr. Ravindra Randeniya held the audience almost mesmerized by his graphic presentation of Bhava Thanha. The Bhava Thanha song composed by me was melodiously sung by Victor Ratnayake who introduced his own music into it.

I dedicated my first Bhava Thanha volume to Hon. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Filling her absence was her son, Hon. Speaker Mr. Anura Bandaranaike who officiating as the chief guest of the occasion received the book's first copy.

Following received copies subsequently, Ven. Dr. Welamitiyawe Kusaladhamma Thero, Chancellor of Vidyalankara University and Head of Peliyagoda Vidyalankara Pirivena on behalf of the Maha Sangha (The Great Buddhist clergy), Fr. Ernest Porutota on behalf of the Christian ecclesiastical fraternity, Mr. Sivabrata Tripathi, Deputy High Commissioner of India deputizing the Government of India, Mr. C.V. Vigneshwaran, Judge of the Supreme

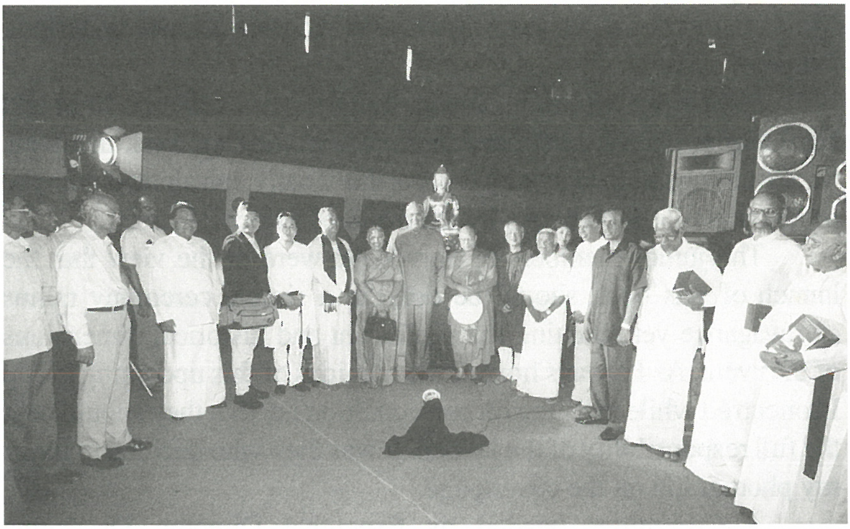

Photo (i) Distinguished visitors who attended the launch of Bhava Thanha

Court, on behalf of the Tamil community, Mr. Omar Kameel, Mayor of Colombo deputing the Muslim community, Nepalese MP, Mr. P.L. Singh, Mr. Mariappan on behalf of the Indian Sarvodaya movement, Bishop William Swinger of the Episcopal Church of California on behalf of the American citizens.

Kalasuri Mr. Tissa Abeysekera did a very comprehensive lecture in both Sinhala and English on the book.

I conferred merit on everybody by my speech.

That is the story of the launch of the first volume of Bhava Thanha.

The experience emboldened me much and propelled me to undertake work regarding the second volume.

Since all the paraphernalia including travel notes and other data were already with me I felt that the release of the second volume would be easy work. But various other work as the Sama Bhavana diverted my attention that it took me two years to hand over its copy to Vishva Lekha. I did not exert writing an introduction to this volume as the introduction to the first volume suffices.

Since the first volume comprised 98 chapters the second volume begins from the 99th chapter and goes on to the 199th chapter thus ending up the same proportion as the first. Pages have also been numbered taking over from the last page of the first volume. Much effort was expended to collect old photographs but I could not fully succeed and hope to overcome this lapse in the next edition. I hope to release the third volume too as soon as I can.

Taking into reckoning the foreword, the introduction and epilogue the book runs into a total of 100 chapters. The background period runs from 1972 to 1985. I have got a good response from the readers of the first volume. Since this book too comes in the tri-language form that too would be useful to readers.

A.T. Ariyaratne

Vishva Niketan
Rawathawatte Road, Moratuwa,
Nov. 5, 2002

Introduction

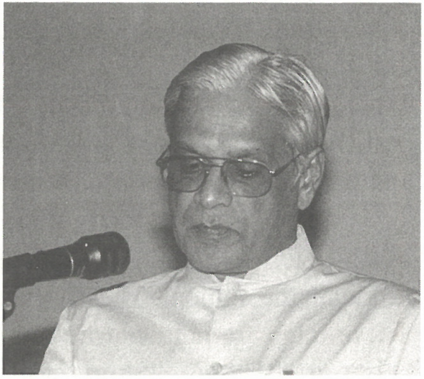

Photo (ii) Prof. J.B. Dissanayake

Humans and other living entities are all subject to birth and death. Between birth and death they are further subject to various vicissitudes of life. But there is a difference. A non-human is not conscious of what happens to its fellow beings. Even from one generation to another, this knowledge does not seep down. The experience garnered by a non-human living entity ends with its death. But in the case of humans one's experience is passed onto another. The education garnered from the experience passes on from the earlier generation to the latter. What is the root of this ability? A wonderful mechanism that he has invented is the answer and that mechanism is "language". Due to the discovery of language every human is capable of transmitting his own experience to another.

The man out hunting would return to his cave and relate to his wife and children and even to his neighbours all the adventures he was subject to. That enriched their knowledge and even entertained them. But these anecdotes had to be narrated to the oncoming generations and for that a further strategy was invented.

And that is the art of writing. He began to record the sounds of his spoken language first via various pictorial representations. Soon some of these representations transformed into "letters". Now he began to juxtapose these letters and put his thoughts, sentiments and experiences into writing. And thus posterity got enriched with the knowledge of what the earlier generations saw, heard and experienced.

Gradually man began to use his linguistic ability and writing ability to record a myriad things. Some wrote poetry. Some composed stories. Yet others wrote instructional matter while another group evoked piety in people. Some shared their experiences with others. Out of these activities were spawned a prolific number of books.

Experiences were one genre of content humans transmitted via these books. They could be one's own experiences or experiences of acquaintances. If an experience is germane to a particular person others are curious to know it. It not only entertains and enriches them but broadens their outlook.

Some do not directly narrate their experiences. They make a hotch-potch of their experiences with experiences of others and fabricate the content. These came to be known as "fabricated tales". These tales are neither true nor false. They are on the borderland between the two. "Short stories" and "novels" belong to this category.

Biographies belong to the category of true stories. Such stories convey aspects of the main character's life. How does the experience of one person become significant to another? Due to the very unique nature of that experience, due to the fact that the experience has been denied to others.

Among the literati is popular a statement made by Lady Murasaki who wrote the Japanese tale, "Genji Monogathari". This statement is that one should record something for posterity only if he or she thinks that that the experience dwelt on is worth preserving before one passes away. The very unique quality earns it a premium and makes it worth sharing with others.

Hitherto I had known Dr. A.T.Ariyaratne as a leading social reformer and as a writer. We got the opportunity to digest the many lectures he delivered at various international conferences. These lectures converted to writing transpire his philosophy conducive to build a better world. That he is also equipped with the art of narrating a story I learnt from this book. At times he becomes a short story teller titillating the reader. Some stories begin and run on in such a way that it makes the reader impatient to reach the end. Had he taken to short story writing professionally he would have ended up as one of our most brilliant writers.

What sort of stories constitute his book? Mostly they are woven around the obstacles and experiences encountered on his voyage of building up the Sarvodaya Movement along with flashes of observations on the lay and ecclesiastical characters he met in the processes, their behaviour patterns and opinions and attitudes.

Though the matter is woven around others who finally surfaces is the narrator and this is due to two reasons. Firstly all that content is sieved by the narrator out of a morass of facts. When Ariyaratne writes of Bundala Gambare or Kanagarajan Kadiramale or Peter Pabst, he sieves out what he feels is significant about that particular person.

The second reason is the philosophy of life. Everyone has some idea of how to run one's life and this is what is finally termed one's philosophy of life. Everything what one does is finally determined by this philosophy of life.

A person may be later guided by political philosophy and economic philosophy but what surfaces uppermost is his basic philosophy of life. This is common to Peter Pabst and to J.R. Jayewardene. Peter Pabst was a "white man" born in Germany. But his philosophy of life was not influenced by his skin colour. About him Ariyaratne exults, "What an immense service you performed, in our little poor country investing your labour for upliftment of our underprivileged! You were never conscious of their colour or creed or ethnicity or caste, status. Like certain fanatics you were not interested in conversion. You looked at everything from a humanitarian's point of view."

Mr. J.R. Jayewardene was a very incisive politician. His political world flaunted the catchword "Dharmista Samajaya", a term which according to Ariyaratne seeped into his mind after visiting the Sarvodaya institution for the first time.

Ariyaratne's own life philosophy is manifest through these narratives. He began the Sarvodaya movement to activate his philosophy. What he wanted to build was an ahimsa (non-violent) and non-exploiting society in accordance with Buddha's teachings.

Sarvodaya is a reflection of Ariyaratne's own philosophy of life. Buddhism is a religion revolving around the mind. It teaches that all human conflicts emerge from the machinations in the mind.

Even war is begot by mental conditions as hatred, anger and competition. Hence if one were to combat war or overcome tension Ariyaratne opines that mind has to be understood in its proper perspective.

He further introspects and searches for the causes of his own sentiments. On his visit to Bundala he gets restless by the things Gambare utters. Certain words at this juncture just come out of his mouth. ‘I just blurted out, no, not blurted but screamed” (page 630). Here he is introspecting “Disgust overwhelmed me. I wanted to be alone. So I drifted away from the crowd, sat on a rocky bed under a tree and basked my eyes on a flowing stream” (page 631)

He sits for lunch with the rest of the family. “But my mind is yet restless. Even while eating, the image of Gambare rises before me. Facets of the sight that greeted me when I walked to the spot where Gambare kept shouting but later stood in a timid posture after putting down his raised sarong and arranging it in order keep haunting me. I keep on talking of Maitree and Avihimsa but why didn’t compassion arise in me at that instance?” (page 631)

I feel that one who tries to search his own mind in that strain is a true Buddhist. One who introspects why mercy fled from him at a particular instance is one who is endowed with depth of thought. Ariyaratne respects Satya Sri Sai Baba without any diminished respect for Buddha.

“My teacher is The Buddha. My faith is the Eight Fold Path He preached. Hence I need no other help but the help of the Triple Gem. But that does not preclude me from honouring and bestowing merit on greater beings than me, like Satya Sri Sai Baba (page 819)

This book is not a fabrication. It is a composite of actual experiences and persons behind these scenes. But certain incidents told here substantiate the saying that “Truth is stranger than fiction”

Prof. J.B. Dissanayake

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99

This is our Meth Medura

SARVODAYA
central office & international headquarters

Photo 1 - Meth Medura

By 1970, the house under the Breadfruit tree sited at No. 493, along Maradana Road had become rather famous nationally and internationally. After the bequeath of Meth Medura, No. 77, De Soysa Road, Moratuwa to Sarvodaya by Mr. Merril A. Fernando, for two years I had to maintain two households. Even after the transfer of the household furniture and documents from the earlier house, as the family of the person to whom I had given the house refused to move I had to continue paying rent.

In 1972 I retired from my teaching profession. And now the maintenance of the new house and sustaining the permanent staff of about 30 entailed much expense and exertion on the part of Neetha and me. Yet the help of friends mitigated the situation and on we went ahead amidst many obstacles, taking many bold decisions with regard to the Sarvodaya Movement.

Right from its inception Sarvodaya was never divided between masters and servants. All of us were dedicated devotees committed to furthering the cause of Sarvodaya. Hence we came to be known as the Sarvodaya family. We addressed each other as Aiya (elder brother), akka (elder sister), malli (younger brother), nangi (younger sister). We even composed a Meth Medura Sarvodaya song that ran as follows:

Meth Medura Sarvodaya song

This is our Meth Medura - our place of solace
Our victorious terrain - our consolation
We are brothers and sisters of Sarvodaya //
No caste and creed nor religion divides us
No social status divides us
Like children of one mother we live in harmony//
This is our Meth Medura//
We adulate virtues - and are keen on gaining knowledge
Elders' instructions - we cherish
Kindness and compassion we spread//
This is our Meth Medura
Nangi, malli, akka, aiya
It is with these endearing terms we address each other
We strive to become nation - building citizens//
This is our Meth Medura//

Mahatma Gandhi established Ashramas all over India and these were the wombs from which the later national leaders sprang. Shanthiniketan was another catalyst that surged India towards an awakening in education, lit-

Photo 1.2 - Mr. and Mrs. Sumith Perera who were in charge of teaching the Meth Medura song

erature and arts. The Kibbutz collective village structure of Israel propelled Israel to become a very powerful country in the political, economic, scientific and technological fields. In the 1960 decade I had a first-hand living experience in Kibbutz villages. I had also a good understanding through readings of the collective farms in Russia and the communes in China.

Taking into reckoning all these precedents my objective was to make Sarvodaya a breeding ground for leaders fed on our vision and philosophy. Meth Medura was to be our basic experimental ground. For such an end, Meth Medura had to be replete in the environmental, material, social, psychological, spiritual, educational and relevant technological arenas. Those who made Meth Medura their home were to emerge as national leaders.

100

Let us build a new man

As the work of Sarvodaya Shramadana Society advanced and got regulated I was fired with the idea of establishing a co-operative family. By this was meant building an entity that transcends all racial, religious, caste, political and other barriers and works neutrally for the common good. It was to be like a very strong abode or village inculcated with noble aims.

The idea seeped into me during my excursions in various countries where I encountered such spiritual and social venues.

Among such venues or centers predominate the Ashrams built by Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, Shanthiniketan and Vishva Bharathi University of Rabindranath Tagore, Hermitages and educational nucleii put up by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and the Kibbutz of Israel.

But I envisaged no carbon copies of these. What I had in mind was a collective family aligned to the Sarvodaya philosophy and based on the Indigenous (Hela) culture. It is true that both the Ashrams of India put up by Gandhi and the Kibbutz of Israel spawned the national leaders of the two countries. But what I had in mind was a training ground that gave prominence to Buddha's teachings. Explicitly this meant going in search of people traumatized by sorrow, fear and want and utilizing our youth as volunteers to help them galvanizing themselves into a collective force. It was as if in miraculous response to the idea surging within me that Mr. Merril A. Fernando donated Meth Medura to the Sarvodaya Movement. It was sited at Divul Gas Junction at Rawatawatte and was a large house of vintage sprawling on about two acres. The moment I visited the place I knew that it was a very apt abode for our Movement. Already the house carried the name "Meth Medura" (House of Compassion) and I decided to continue the meaningful name.

No words can adequately evaluate the great gift thus made by Mr. Merril Fernando. My association with him made me ponder on the happiness of being born as humans. When we move among fragrant flowers we too imbibe that fragrance. Mixing with such virtuous and generous benefactors not only infected us but made us follow in their footsteps.

Many factors surged within me regarding the outcome of Meth Medura. Among them was a plan to establish the National and International Headquarters of Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, building up a Sarvodaya educational unit, experimenting with a collective way of living and putting up technical and occupational centers on a mini scale.

Looking back, I seem to have achieved all these objectives and this I consider, a big piece of luck.

When establishing Meth Medura my beacon light was the Saptha Aparihaneeya Doctrine preached by the Buddha to the Vajjis and I wished to fashion our activities along these teachings.

This was the format I developed.

1. The Sarvodaya family should get together thrice a day - in the morning, noon and evening.
2. They should gather in harmony and go away in harmony.
3. They should follow good customs of yore, be religious, not violate regulations enforced, and not enforce regulations that cannot be followed.
4. Elders should set an example to the young and young should respect elders.
5. Integrity of women and children should be protected.
6. Should follow traditional rituals, national festivals etc.
7. Invite venerable clergy of Buddhism and other religions and venerate them, host them and learn from them.

The Meth Medura timetable ran as follows.

At 4.30 a.m. all at Meth Medura have to wake up. By 5.00 a.m. the morning cup of tea is ready for them. At 5.30 a.m. takes place the family gathering that commences with the rendering of the Awakening song. This song composed by me and sung at various Sarvodaya functions runs as follows:

Let us build a new man - let us enrich our land
Let us do lifelong service for nation building - and develop ourselves too//
Let's abstain from taking away life and exert to protect lives,
Lust, let us abhor - and strive towards a lofty nature
Let us deplore falsehood - and demolish differences
Tale carrying, we abhor - also rough words
Let pleasant words be on our lips and virtue engulf us
Let us avoid useless jabber - and indulge in meaningful talk
Impurity, should flee - and let Dhamma crown the world.

After the song, religious rituals follow. The minor religions are given the first chance. Then the major religion follows. After this all participate in Maitree Bhavana (Meditation on Loving Kindness). Then a residential member presents the thought for the day and delivers a short lecture. This can be embellished with quotations from great thinkers or extracts from worthy books. Now comes the confessional, where those who have committed some faulty acts recount them and ask for forgiveness. If the faulty behaviour is rather substantial a punishment can follow. In the case of a rather grave offence, the family gathering can enforce expulsion for one year or more.

After the family gathering from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 a.m.

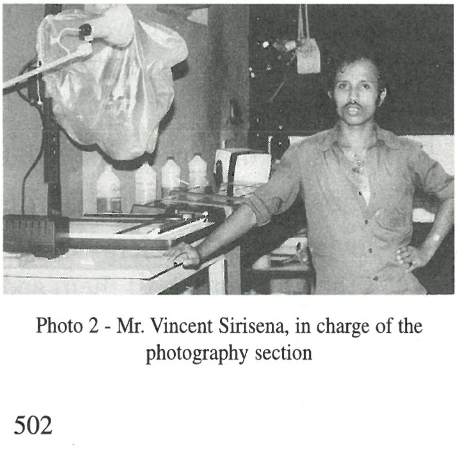


Photo 2 - Mr. Vincent Sirisena, in charge of the photography section

Photo 3 - Mr. E.S. Perera who gave a training in carpentry

takes place the cleaning up of premises, both house and garden and also cultivation activities. After breakfast at 8.00 a.m. the members disperse to their training centers aligned to industries and crafts as Batik making, printing, metal work, carpentry, motor mechanism, photography, handwork. These were the areas at the initial stage.

In the case of visits by special guests, separate programmes are provided.

In addition many a youth came to us to partake in our Youth Leadership programmes. Many visiting lecturers and fitting personnel already resident with us and I volunteered to guide them according to a curriculum we ourselves framed. Such a programme was a novelty and was very successful. No fees were charged from students and these courses excelled in quality. Many a programme is today run by fee-levying institutions. Duration of our programmes ran from two weeks, then a month to 3 months.

Students who left to their villages after this training became the pioneers who piloted pre-schools, "singithi havul" (Kids' corners), farming communes, Samudan (Sharing Groups) havul, Shramadana Societies, Shanthi Sena etc. A vast village re-awakening resulted under them and on my visits to the villages where they served I was really overjoyed to see their frenzy of activity. Meanwhile many visitors were attracted to Meth Medura to see what was going on. These visitors impressed, always gifted us with money and in kind and encouraged us to go on. I was responsible for the production of pamphlets and booklets detailing our work at this time. Further began the issue of a monthly newspaper

Photo 4 - Volunteer workers of Meth Medura

Photo 5- Local visitors of Meth Medura

Photo 5.1 - Mr. Ronnie de Mel addressing the Family Gathering and his speech translated to Tamil by Mr. S.K. Thambillai

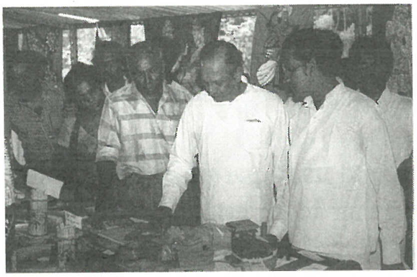


Photo 5.2 - Minister of State
Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis

Photo 5.3 - Minister of Social Services
Mr. S.S. Kulatilake

Photo 5.4 - Leader of the Senate
Mr. A. Ratnayake addressing the Family Gathering

Photo 5.5 -
First visit of Mr. & Mrs. R. Premadasa to Meth Medura in 1970

Photo 6 - Foreign visitors of Meth Medura

Photo 6.1 - Count Lumsdorf a German Minister

Photo 6.2 - Vice President of the World Bank Mr. David Hopper with Dr. W.M.Thilakaratne, the Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Photo 6.3 - Prof. Bursma, Minister of Welfare of Netherlands and his wife

SARVODAYA FAMILY
WELCOMES
MADAM GENSCHER
AND PARTY

Photo 6.4 - Mrs. Genscher wife of the Finance Minister of the German Republic

Photo 6.5 - With Mr. Gao E, the Chinese Ambassador

Photo 6.6 - Visit of the Prince Klaus of Netherlands

titled Sarvodaya and an English magazine called Dana for the English readers.

Soon we began to attract foreign visitors who very often trekked to our villages and stayed in the humble rural abodes and helped with our work. These visitors were from all parts of the world and they came in search of us and Sarvodaya. Thus Meth Medura had transformed into a University of Life.

Meth Medura life was both frugal and sweet. For six years we enjoyed the sweetness and suffered the frugal aspect too facing the challenges that came our way. The collective format of living we retained and into this circle were absorbed about 60 - 70 external ones.

By 1972 since I had resigned from my teaching job, I had to look for new sources of income to run all these programmes. I must here state that when I am plummeted into a desperate situation a stroke of luck comes my way in a miraculous style. This time the windfall that came my way was the Ramon Magsaysay International award. Not only did it bring in a big cash prize but many gains accrued from it at international level. One was that I became an executive member of the World Assembly of Youth. Further I zoomed to an international figure. I was invited to various International conferences and also asked to deliver lectures. All the money I earned as lecture fees I invested in sustenance of the Sarvodaya movement. My annual income from these lectures was about a lakh. But yet it was inadequate to feed our members with three meals and we often took leafy supplements with our meals, i.e. green leaves grown on our own garden as gotukola, spinach, katurumurunga and mugunuwenna.

Many of those who led frugal lives at the early stages still continue to work with us. Among them are the younger sisters and brothers as Ukku Banda, M.D. Abeynaike, Soma Abeynayake, Lasitha Wijesooriya, Paul Fernando, Nanda Henepola, Kulasiri Vithanvasam, B.A. Sumanadasa. When I see them, I am not only happy but a sense of respect arises within me. They stood with me through thick and thin, facing many an obstacle and threat for they were cognizant of my philosophy, my sentiments and aspirations. Like murals on a wall they remained steadfast and I consider them my closest fellow-travellers in this voyage of Samsara.

Today we have reached a higher plane. And we have conquered the bitter phases. But I do not take it as my personal triumph. It is a collective triumph. My role was the guidance and exposure to my philosophy. We have achieved the utmost success.

But we must not forget the foreign institutions that helped us. In 1972 such agencies were the Fredrich Naumann Stiftung of Germany, The World Assembly of Youth, NOVIB of Netherlands, and Oxfam of England. Their names should be etched in gold in the annals of Sarvodaya.

Photo 7 - They worked at Sarvodaya then as now

Photo 7.1
M.G. Ukkubanda

Photo 7.2
M.D. Abeynayake

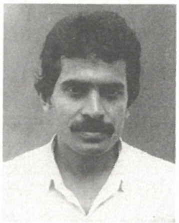


Photo 7.3
Kulasiri Vithanawasam

Photo 7.4
Lasitha Wijesooriya

Photo 7.5
Nanda Henepola

Photo 7.6
Nimal Somachandra

Photo 7.7
Somasiri Gamage

Photo 7.8
Paul Fernando

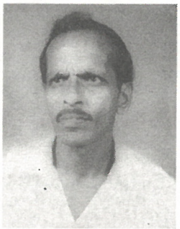
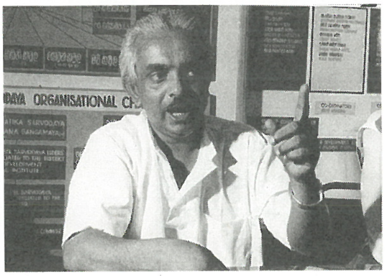


Photo 7.9
P.D. Piyadasa

101

Introducing Development Education



The most decisive factor that influences a society positively or negatively is education, a factor that a teacher understands clearly. This is what motivated us in the 1950 decade to instill in Nalandians as well as in students of other schools a very wide development education via Sarvodaya camps. Even the network of Sarvodaya camps of the 60 s was propelled by this realization.

If I remember right it was Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Quamby who named this programme as Study Service programme. While on a research on this project in varied countries they participated in our camps too.

Photo 8 - From the villages they trekked to follow our courses

Mr. Alec Dixon, a Britisher was an educationalist who experimented on co-ordinating educational voluntary services with the experiences of youth. He had met me several times with Mr. Piet Dijkstra and had held many lectures here as a guest speaker of the Commonwealth. He was the founder of the CSO (Community Service Volunteers) and VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas).

I associated Mr. Alec Dixon as an elder. Mrs. Dixon too expressed much enthusiasm on the subject and co-operated fully. Mr. Dixon was later knighted by the Queen. I was very sad to hear about his demise a few years back. I met him last at a Conference conducted by JYVA (Japan Youth Voluntary Organization).

Photo 9 - Mr. D.P. Jayasinghe, one of our first voluntary workers

By the '70 decade I had realized that our issues cannot be solved by educational solutions alone. Hence I amalgamated education and development and termed it "Development Education." This was a very rich avenue for higher students but how was I to give this idea to our bureaucrats? No attempt of mine proved successful here. So I personally formulated a developmental education service at Meth Medura for School leavers and university students. This course comprised two sections.

1. Community Leadership Course
2. A vocational course aimed at locating innate talents of students and encouraging them.

Initially everyone had to follow the Community leadership course and then get onto the next course. These two courses were linked together and a natural, material, psychological and social environment was a better alternative to the formal classroom to foster this scheme.

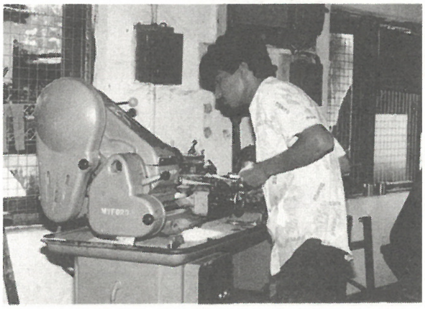


Photo 10 - Training in technical know-how

It was in this time context that the 1971 insurgency emerged. Many stranded after this holocaust came to seek shelter at Sarvodaya. I tried to even re-direct some leaders of this movement into a positive path but I am not sure how many I was able to reform.

Photo 11 - Metal work

At this stage there were even stranded young monks. If these too were not directed to the correct path the country was on the brink of disaster. My only asset was my courage. Cognizant of the fact that mind is the greatest treasure I tried to solve this problem by making use of the philosophy I had built for years and garnered much success here.

But I was in a quandary how to introduce it to the youth. We ie. Neetha,myself and the children decided to be in the caress of the god of poverty then. This is what Mahathma Gandhi termed as Daridra Narayana. Then we began to live as one family along with all at Meth Medura. Concentrating on the spiritual mores of mercy, kindness and maitree we led a very peaceful life. Here we could cultivate an atmosphere redolent of the simple atmosphere of a Gandhian ashram conducive to spiritual depth. That sarvodaya family we built that day yet continues. There were changes regarding the personnel comprising that society but its format remained the same.

Even today we live as members of one society.

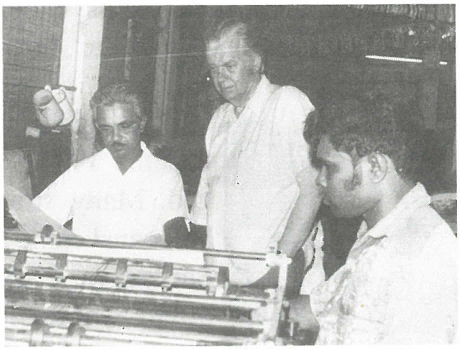


Photo 12 - Dr. E.F. Schumacker's visit to printing section

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* This same fact has been elaborated in "Dassenena Sampanno", the 98th chapter of the first volume.

102

Ven. Henpitagedera Thero joins Sarvodaya

Photo 13 -
Most Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero with Ven. Sumangala

It happened on a morning, a few days after the 1970 General Elections. While I was perusing the daily papers in the inner compound of my abode, Harsha Navaratna, a younger Sarvodaya member came running in haste and informed the arrival of Henpitagedera Thero.

I laid out a white cloth draped chair for him and after seating him along with Sumangala Podi Hamuduruvo who had accompanied him knelt at their feet while he wished me well. Then announced the prelate in a deep voice.

"Can you remember you telling me recently, 'Just drop the nuisansical politics and join our Sarvodaya and help us to rejuvenate our island as a Dhammadeepa'. Now I have come for it. Now you must explain to me all about Sarvodaya"

He stood up after this and I now took him along to examine all the panels that demonstrated our Movement. I explained to him that retrieving of all living entities from fear and sorrow, a cardinal aim of the Buddha formed the foundation of Sarvodaya, and that Sarvam Udayam that epitomised this attempt when dissected is Sarvam Udayam which means the Awakening of All. Then I expounded that the Chaturarya Satya or the Four Noble Truths that the Buddha preached i.e. Sorrow, cause for sorrow, doing away with sorrow, way to demolition of sorrow formed our guiding policy. When we are resuscitating a village we apply this practically and I showed him the board which exhibited the four steps we took, i.e. The degeneration of the village, causes for it, resuscitating it, the path of resuscitation.

The Sarvodaya developmental work begins with an individual. Building up an individual's personality is our basic aim. Then follow the awakening of the family unit, rural or urban community, the country, then the world community. If put more simply these encompass the individual, family village, country and the world. The next board illustrated this procedure. When activating these again we made use of Buddhist philosophy. Here we utilized the concepts of Metta (love), Karuna (compassionate action), Muditha (joy of service) and Upekka (equanimity).

Our personality development in its initial stage spanned from the conception to two and half years. Then the Singithi programme takes over the shaping of the child's personality and the pre-school programme. I also explained to him our programmes for youth, for mothers, for farmers and elders and several other programmes.

Then I focused on the Sarvodaya Shramadana camps. These camps fulfilled ten basic needs and here we monitored our activities to draw out the inert energy and collective force in the rural populace and divert these for their development.

In this strain, I explained to him via our visual aids all the data aligned to the new social order envisaged by the Sarvodaya beginning from an individual's development through that of the family, the village and the Gram Swaraj (administration of the village) that culminated in Deshodaya (awakening of the country) and Vishvodaya (Awakening of the world).

To all this, Gnanaseeha Thero, imbued not only with knowledge of religion but with knowledge of life and society listened in a composed and happy mood. Now he issued a long sigh and in his deep voice said, "Mr. Ariyaratne, since the days I remember I have been propelled by these very aims. This is the only path left to a bhikkhu. No other. You have formulated a very practical path for the people's progress. Now I wish to join in your cause and work for Sarvodaya during the rest of my life"

The steadfast way he spoke strengthened me much.

Now I took him to observe our pre-school, the home garden, printing section, Batik unit, cane works unit and other crafts units – and also the Praja leadership classes.

Then bestowing alms on him and after our vegetarian lunch I convened a special family gathering where the prelate delivered a speech –

"It is true that I spoke on political platforms these past few years. In fact I spent three and half years in prison. But I am not a political bhikku. From my youth I have exerted to get back for us the liberty, culture and ethics we lost during our colonialism and another aim was to build up an egalitarian society as that preached by the Buddha. That is why I took to politics but I was disillusioned by party politics. Henceforth I have decided to become a dedicated worker of Sarvodaya. As an initial step the training institute at Pathakada, I will be gifting as a Training institute for training monks as community leaders. I request you to receive it."

Chants of Sadhu emanated from the audience while everybody knelt and worshipped the great monk. We not only felt overjoyed but hope grew high in us for our future.

The Founder of the Bhikku Training Institute

Photo 14 -
With student Bhikkus

The 1970 decade saw the efflorescence of the Sarvodaya movement both nationally and internationally. Among my mentors at this time stands out Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero.

He was addressed by us as "our Panditha Hamuduruvo" as a mark of esteem. Though he merits several chapters in this book limitation of space compels me to allot only one chapter to both honour him plus introduce him to the reader.

The Venerable was born on December 18, 1910 at Henpitagedera to a family named Sakalasurya who contributed widely to the area's religious arena especially to the construction of temples. Three sons of three Sakalasurya brothers have later been enrobed with the full consent of the young ones. The entry to the Sasana had been made on January 16, 1919 when he was 9 years and 1 month. Then as a student in the 5th standard he had been entitled to the Denham Scholarship for further study in England which he had refused to avail himself of opting to be enrobed instead.

As a Samanera exhibiting much inclination plus prowess for studies, he had first gained proficiency in Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit. Soon he began composing literary works in both prose and verse and soon showed an exceptional ability in delivering sermons. He went on to contribute to contemporary newspapers as Dinamina, Swadesha Mitraya, Sinhala Bauddhaya and Sinhala Jathiya and further got involved in debates with famous pundits of the day. He used the pseudonyms "Suraguru" and "Mayurapada" when partaking in these debates. Soon he authored "Sinhala Megha Duta" and passed the Pundit exam in Balagalle Sri Saraswathi Pirivena as its brightest student.

The prelate's fame thus spread via education, via the writing field and also as a forceful preacher. Soon he began to be invited to various temples and meetings for sermons. Out of the areas he thus began to visit, the province of Sabaragamuwa had attracted him most especially due to its natural beauty. It had almost been a spiritual attraction.

The beauteous mountain ranges, the waterfalls cascading down them, the gardens of flowers of myriad hues that greeted the eye, carpets of green tea extending for miles and the very clouds that floated like massive white giants across the blue skies – these mesmerized the Thero.

But very soon he sensed that underlying all this magnificent beauty sizzled a great tragedy. What was it? At this time the white man dominated the whole Sabaragamuwa terrain sharing the dominance with white missionaries. Deprived of their land the natives were living in small plots and hovels. The native feudal leaders themselves exploited and traumatized these innocent villagers in yet another way.

Now going over from working for the development of the Sasana, the prelate concentrated on a mission of alleviating their sufferings and soon encountered hostility of the privileged class. But this very opposition spurred him on to more bold action. Later imprisoned he wrote on his reminiscences in an autobiographical form. (This was edited and published in 1982 by Mr. Gunadasa Liyanage under the title "From Henpitagedera across Welikada"), In the introduction to this book by Henpitagedera Gnanavasa Thero he writes,

"The entry of Gnanaseeha Thero to Sabaragamuwa area in the 30s marked a fresh page in the area's annals. Who dominated the land in Sabaragamuwa then? The Whites. Their kingdom just

Photo 15 - Community leadership Bhikku Training Institute at Pathakade

sprawled, while in the valleys plummeted below girdled by arecanut trees lived the villagers. These belonged to Nindagam, Devalagam and Viharagam and the feudal lords carried out their own rule over them. The gems found in these, the poor men handed over to the feudal overlords and to the white men while they on the frugal remnants. Villagers were prohibited from wearing banians, jackets and were debarred from using umbrellas. There were no roads, no schools and no health facilities. Ratnapura had become a gamefield of the white conquistadors. How Gnanaseeha Thero played a stalwart role here, never giving into injustice or adharma or even to gods is manifest in the first part of this book".

In 1934 the Thero built a small hermitage in Mudduwa and lived there. Here he began a series of sermons that attracted listeners by hundreds. After Vas season, some families of high rank invited him to build a pirivena in Ratnapura. Agreeing he first built one on leased land but later bought it. That was the origin of Mudduwa Sri Sumana Pirivena. Now radiated the educational and religious service of the prelate from this nucleus.

His main efforts were directed at eradicating the vicious caste prejudices and Nikaya dissensions, while simultaneously working to enhance the diminished religious fervour of Buddhists. Beginning to teach Sinhala and Pali in Ratnapura Seevali

Photo 16 -
Conferment of Sannas to Pathakade bhikkus

Photo 17 -
Main building at the Bhikku Training Institute

College he soon diverted the children's mind to religious trends. Soon began the movement of establishing several schools for boys and girls. His next endeavour was to establish a higher institute of learning for Bhikkus on par with a University. In 1944 after much effort a venue was found for this. The Bhikku Training Institute was put up here. This land had been located due to the efforts of Mr. D.M. Gunaseela of Devalagama, an acquaintance of the Thero.

By this time Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, an upcoming youthful politician who held the ministerial reins of local government had become a friend of him. Due to this politician's conversion to Buddhism from Christianity his father had been estranged from him then, and refused him financial succour or help of any sort. This led the young man to live at the old ancestral abode of the family in Colombo sited along Silversmith Street and live on his earnings as a lawyer.

It was Gnanaseeha Thero's intention to get SWRD to cut the first sod of the Bhikku Training Institute building to which the latter agreed. But unfortunately as arrangements were being made for the ceremony the prelate's mother already ill passed away. The event of cutting the first sod was scheduled for 2.25 p.m. on May 18, 1944 and the mother's funeral rites were to begin at 3.00 p.m. on the same day. Since all relatives far and near had been informed the funeral rites had to go on as arranged. Finally what happened was that the Thero saw to his full contribution to his mother's funeral and left a message to be read in his absence at the final funeral ceremony and left for Pathakade.

Photo 18 -
The trainee Bhikkus

A paragraph from this letter reads as follows:

"Were I to wake my mother from her last sleep and put the query," Mother, shall I wait for your funeral or go on to the place where the first sod is being cut to materialize a great aim of mine, I know you would answer "Go there". Let the merit of this service of mine be invested in my mother attaining Nirvana".

That was how the letter ended and many congregated there had shed tears as they listened.

Now began the Thero's quest for collecting the material to put up his building and for this purpose began going round the country conducting series of sermons. He succeeded in this objective. Simultaneously he put a new Pirivena at Eheliyagoda and registered it as Eheliyagoda Sri Sumana Vidyalaya. A philanthropist of Ratnapura area at this time, who was also a social worker, village headman and physician and named Tummodara Vedamahata much appreciative of the prelate's endeavours donated an Arama replete with all facilities.

All this time the Thero had confined himself to religious work and never dabbled politics. But on the threshold of the 1947 elections an event drew him unexpectedly to

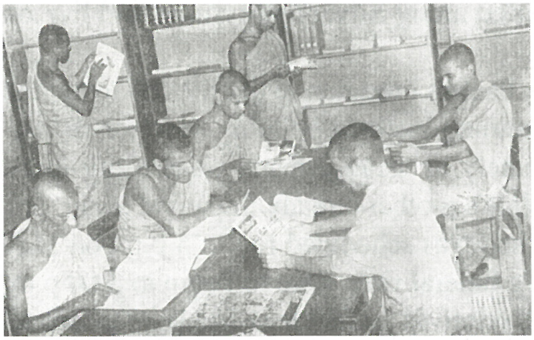

Photo 19 - Library

the whirl of politics. The sequence of the incident is as follows: Mr. D.S. Senanayake, who from the Minuwangoda seat won the elections in 1931 and 1936 and went on to become Minister of Agriculture and who was selected also the Chairman of Dayakas of the Sangha Sabha of Ramanna Nikaya of Sri Lanka had to contest the Mirigama seat under the 1947 Soulbury Constitution against Mr. Edmund Samarakkody of the Sama Samaja party, a very popular youth who could be an immense threat to the former. Mr. Samarakkody had initiated the practice of courting the Sanga support and now Mr. D.S. Senanayake likewise needed their help. He went to meet Gnanaseeha thero and asked his help after stationing at Balagalla. But the prelate was not willing since he was knee deep in construction work of the Training Institute.

Photo 20 -
A training class in session

But undaunted DS went on coaxing him saying,

"This is a simple matter. When I win and our party comes to power we will do it for you. Achieving independence implies helping in national work as this"

After much haggling the Thero agreed especially in the belief that after independence the government would help him in his work. He joined in the election campaign of DS going from door to door. Mr. D.S. Senanayake not only won but ended up Prime Minister and Thero Gnanaseeha visited him at Temple Trees.

But he received a strange reply from the PM

"I have to tell you one thing. This is a religious assignment. If I help a Buddhist building, on the request of Christian fathers I have to help their buildings too. Governments have no religion. You say Buddhang Saranang Gachchami, (I seek Buddha's help) but you don't say Andu Saranang gachchami (I seek help of the government.)"

And the PM burst into laughter. The Thero felt that he had been tricked by a politician and after frowning angrily at Mr. Senanayake he left the place thundering boldly.

"I was engrossed in my own work. You deceived me by false promises and drove me to politics. Remember even now that making false promises is a grave crime. Till you are here remember that I will never enter these premises again."

He made it a point to inform Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike about the treachery of Mr. Senanayake. The political upheavals in this country began soon after.

First Mr. Bandaranaike gave in his resignation from the UNP on July 9, 1951 on an issue of 10 proposals presented at the Sinhala Maha Sabha held at Madampe, Chilaw. This resignation seems to have thrown the country's politics into a new path. Followed these historical events in succession – death of Mr. D.S. Senanayake on March 21, 1952, appointment of Mr. Dudley Senanayake as Premier on 26th. The 1953 August Hartal and the resignation of Mr. Dudley Senanayake on October 12th and the succession of Sir John Kotelawela to the post.

Other than these the series of programmes Gnanaseeha Thero promulgated in order to stage a great Buddhist revival on the 2500th Buddha Jayanthi created much interest. Much support was given by the following for this campaign – Ven. Kalukondayawe Pragnasekhara, Heenatiyana Sri Dhammaloka Thero, Ven. Narada, Incumbent of Vajirarama temple, Mr. N.Q. Dias, GA, Ratnapura and Prof G.P.Malalasekera. In the meantime as Mr. Dudley Senanayake had declared that he was not participating in the 1956 elections Gnanaseeha Thero was mainly responsible for building up Mr. Bandaranaike as the new central figure in Lanka's political arena.

Further from the prelate's indefatigable exertion resulted the establishment of the Buddhist Data Investigation Committee by the Bauddha Maha Sammelanaya, getting many laymen and Buddhist clergy involved in the process and the publication of the report by Balangoda Dhammavijaya Press. On February 4, 1956 at Ananda College, this report was handed over to the Mahanayake of the Asgiriya Chapter on behalf of Buddhists.

Almost all Buddhist clergy associations amalgamated into one united Bhikkhu Peramuna and out of this emerged the Pancha Maha Bala Vegaya.

On February 18, Sir John Kotelawela, the PM suddenly dissolved the UNP government then in power and decided to hold re-elections on April 7 and 10. In this election the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna led by Mr. Bandaranaike gained a massive victory. The UNP seats were decimated to a mere 8. The gigantic power behind this triumph was our Gnanaseeha Pundit Thero. But unfortunately even before the great national revival under this government was to begin, Mr. Bandaranaike was assassinated. It was surmised to be a political conspiracy.

After Mr. Bandaranaike's demise, Gnanaseeha Thero took steps to ensure the non-collapse of the government and the oncoming of an non-regnum period and went on to convene all sections of the party and got Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike to agree to lead the party. Though this party did not win the March 1960 elections the United Front achieved under Madam a resounding victory, in June 1960.

But even under her government the objectives envisaged by our thero did not materialize mainly due to the indifference of certain bureaucrats. If discipline was not to be restored, corruption and violence would follow, was his opinion. Democracy was not a panacea for the present ills and only dictatorship could have a strong hand. Spurred by these thoughts he wrote a book titled "Ekadhipathi Vadaya" (Dictatorship). But in the next elections held in July 1965 the party that came to power was the UNP led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake that was not to the thero's liking. This government began interrogations on the book written by the prelate misconstruing it as an attempt to bring back Mrs. Sirimavo to power. On April 17, 1966 the prelate was arrested and imprisoned.

Three years and one month the thero spent his life in prison but that did not flag his energy and he began using the prison as a dormitory and took to writing. Finally a total of 28 books in Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit emerged out of his pen, while in prison. After a period of 1228 days in bondage, he came out and declared

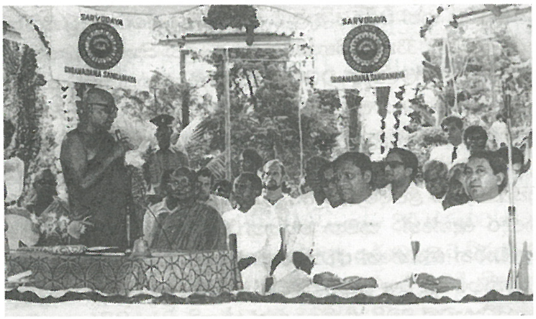

Photo 21 -
At a Pathakade Sarvodaya meeting

that the most active and useful period of his life was that spent behind prison bars. This was because his full time other than the time allotted to court visits he invested in writing.

One of these books won an award too by the Sri Lanka Literary panel. That was for a book of poetry composed on King Dutugemunu as far as I can remember. When the hustlings of the 1970 elections began, he put in his full share to make the SLFP the victor. But he decided to withdraw from active politics and chose as an alternative working platform – the Sarvodaya.

This he has mentioned in his "From Henpitagedera across Welikade"

"In 1970 was staged the elections. I put in my optimum energy for this. Then I decided to quit politics and donated my Pathakade Institute to Sarvodaya movement and I am now working devotedly for the advancement of this movement.

Never have I met another to equal Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero in the arena of love and dedication to one's country, religion and humanity in general.

Photo 22 - Mr. Premadasa's visit to Pathakade Bhikku Training Institute in 1980

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An Oasis in a Desert

At the initial stage of my friendship with Netherlands, i.e. years 1969–70, I got many opportunities to visit that country. I am of the belief that the Netherlanders have a soft spot for us. I could discern their respect for our people. Not only the Netherlands intelligentsia but even the average person knew about our country. Their colonial dominance plus the fact that many books written by persons of Netherlands origin as Dr. R.L. Spittel, Dr. Brian Krester, Christine Wilson, R.L. Brohier had entered Dutch literature could be the causes for this.

During my stay in Netherlands I built up affiliations with the NOVIB Organization. It is a very widespread aid and social service organization working on a global level with the help of the Dutch government. Whenever I visited this country the NOVIB executives took pains to take me to varied villages and cities and address assemblies on the Sarvodaya philosophy and its mechanism and further got me to elucidate on how I perceive the NOVIB movement. I could discern that these executives were finally trying to motivate the Dutch to help underprivileged countries. Most of my audience comprised groups of teachers and pupils and welfare society members.

On one of my visits there, I was on an intercity travel with a superior officer of NOVIB. During our conversation he happened to mention that various countries send project applications and that they are directed to the Ministry of Development Corperation since all their work is patronized by the state. This was news to me as we had never forwarded such an application to them purely due to ignorance. So I asked whether Sarvodaya too cannot send in a project application.

"Why not?" he said. "But tomorrow is the dead line for receiving applications. If by tomorrow morning you can submit one I will present it to the Director Board"

That very night I visited the NOVIB office, borrowed a type writer and a bundle of papers and till dawn next day worked on the project application themed around the establishment of a Youth Leadership Training Institute and a farm. The work was easy as for a long time the idea had been churning in my mind. Next morning Mr. Jerard Van Vlijman, a friend of mine and Secretary-General of NOVIB on seeing my application was amazed that I had worked on it only one night. He accepted it and said that all proposals received would be submitted to the Ministry. I further met a government officer dealing with the subject and verbally explained matters to him.

I was optimistic that my proposal would be accepted, especially due to the respect they showed me and the confidence placed in me. Further always at the back of mind lurked my aim to better the lot of the rural youth, an inclination no doubt arising from the fact that I was a teacher who had entered the social service field.

My focus was on the sorry state of the unemployed youth in our villages, a fact close to my heart since I too belonged to the rural populace and was no stranger to the sentiments and aspirations of this genre. The many economic and social factors that hindered their upward climb I was well aware of. They had no saviour. Politicians had to fill this role but the partisan politics never rose to the occasion.These factors propelled my entry to the field of helping them.

I was aware that the project proposal I had submitted was of much momentum for our Movement. In fact I hastened my return to look for a land to start the venture I had in mind. Mr. M.W. Karunananda and Mr. Upali Senanayake helped me much in this. Fully cognizant of the importance of agriculture, we were on a hunt for a suitable land away from the capital to begin our agricultural venture, preferably from the Vavuniya, Polonnaruwa, Hambantota areas. Though much energy and time were expended our search was fruitless. Finally Mr. W.J. Fernando, GA of Moneragala known to me personally gave us some good news that a land of about 500 acres vacated by the Rice Millers Association could be given to us. The land was in Tanamalwila.

Photo 23-
Tanamalwila terrain fringed by Kirindi oya

We immediately fixed a date and time and went to survey the land. Fringed by the Kirindi river the land certainly suited us. Of course the land was denuded of large trees but it seemed an ideal place to build our training institute and farm. We agreed to take it over that made Mr. Fernando too happy. Next hurdle was to get the greenlight from the Land Commissioner and Mr. Fernando volunteered to help us out. He was even kind enough to issue a temporary license to us to go ahead with our work.

By June 19th 1972, fulfilling all our hopes and plans and across many obstacles the 500 acre land targeted to build the institute was ours legally endorsed by government writ. Here we have to thank the following – Mr. W.J. Fernando, GA, Moneragala, K.N. Weerakkody, Land Commissioner, PM Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, the Minister of Agriculture for their kind patronage.

Photo 24. -
The 'Wel Palama' (creeper bridge) at the entrance to the farm

We got the land ideally suited to our needs on a 30 year old lease. The land was bounded by a State teak plantation on the south, by the Kirindi Oya on the West and the Galahitiya chena stretch on the North.

When we took over this land only a little mud hut was there. The Rice Mills & Producers Association that had

Photo 25-
The new building complex at Tanamalwila

leased this land earlier had denuded it of all foliage and what we got was only a land of shrubbery. Though a few tanks spangled in four places here and there disrepair for a number of years led to a desolate appearance. They badly needed repair. I personally visited this place and with the help of Sarvodaya brethren set up a few tents and camps by the Kirindi Oya. Later we were able to put up a wooden two-storeyed structure in this venue, a building that provided lodgings to Mr. Karunananda, Mr. Upali Senanayake and myself when we went there. Soon it came to be called Hilton House.

We held a few Shramadana camps and repaired the tanks. Then one Mr. R.S. Udakumbura and some engineer friends of Mr. Upali Senanayake began work earnestly on the project but soon difficulties emerged. The work was going to be very costly and still foreign aid was not forthcoming. We had only been using the meagre resources in our hand that was not at all sufficient for the massive project. So I made efforts to solicit the aid of my brother, Mr. Weeraman Jinadasa, then working as a civil engineer in Britain. He accepted my invitation and came over much to my relief.The chena cultivations on the land had begun to decrease the cost on food.

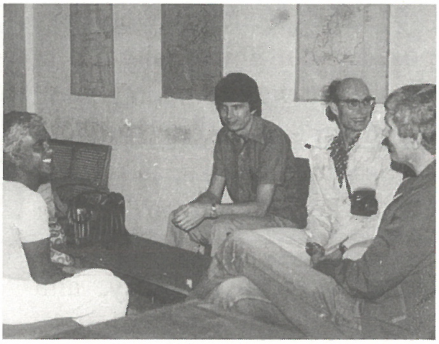

Photo 26 - Mr. Weeraman Jinadasa with NOVIB delegates

After my brother came, he and a friend and a friend of Mr. Upali Senanayake worked on a number of new buildings, the total network of which began to be called Sammavasa. After NOVIB aid was received we accelerated the work, beginning with a livestock farm. Now we were able to provide free milk to malnourished children and pre-school children.With the repair of the tanks work on the fields cum chenas was feasible. We invested Rs.1,45,000/- to buy a new bulldozer. By 1975, 175 acres of chena land and 80 acres allotted for paddy fields were harvested.

In 1976 Mr. Weeraman Jinadasa became managing director of the farm and invested his optimum dedication to the task in hand. The training and expertise he had received in Britain as a civil engineer was responsible for the cluster of new buildings in the site. The remarkable fact about these buildings was that they were constructed completely with indigenous material. Built of bricks and tiles and the floor cemented, each unit of the residential buildings could accommodate 12. They were economical and pleasant to look at and earned the praise of the NOVIB delegates.The village around was named Jeevan village.

Soon we were able to put up a Development Education Centre where youth who came from all over the island were given a training in agriculture courses. The focus was on agriculture methods that discouraged the use of chemicals and insecticides and used only indigenous methods. A batch of 300 students was accommodated for one session. And in the above aspect this course differed from the courses run by the Agriculture Department and Peradeniya training school and gained much popularity too. Soon our trainees were considered suitable to obtain the rural level appointments in the Agriculture Department after completion of their course.

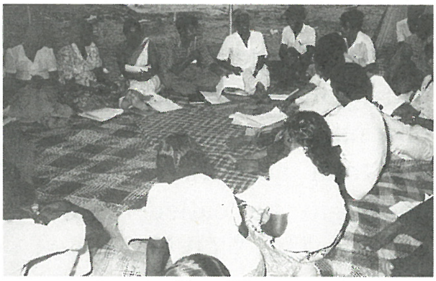

Photo 27 -
Training of Community workers

The students were exposed to our philosophy of life too. There was no demarcation among the different strata of consultants, clerks, labourers etc. and everybody put in their share. Collective sense, the sense of responsibility, and plain living were the hallmarks of behaviour. Actually the institution assumed the veneer of a Life Long University. Soon courses in carpentry, metal work, nursing, sewing, and livestock farming began to be held together with pre-school training, leadership training, and Shanthi Sena courses.

The developmental level achieved by our Tanamalwila project can be gauged by the following entry made by Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa when he visited this place,

"I witnessed here, Sri Lanka's path to a new dawn and it mesmerized me."

The experiences I underwent in the course of this project were not only vivid but extremely unpleasant and tortuous. But I was not discouraged. A few of these I shall narrate here.

I awaited impatiently for the expected financial aid from NOVIB but finally the frustrating reply I got was that since ours is not a State -- registered social service organization that the aid I asked for cannot be endorsed.Were I to solve this problem, the aid will be sent. I soon took the necessary steps to get legal status for Sarvodaya as a social service institute by a parliament act. Mr. Dudley Senanayake's UNP government then was running the country and I met him and discussed the problem. He took all steps to present the act at the forthcoming Parliament sessions but unluckily government was dissolved soon. In 1970 the SLFP

Photo 28 -
Engaged in Agricultural pursuits

Photo 29 -
Workers in the farm

government headed by Mrs. Sirimavo came to power defeating the UNP. I again started from zero and with the help of Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, then Home Affairs Minister, got the Act through.

Now the problem solved, NOVIB was able to work on the allocation of our money.

Next I had discussions with the Government to acquire the Tanamalwila land to Sarvodaya. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, then Minister of Agriculture made all the arrangements for the acquisition but came the April uprising of 1971 that stalled all work of this nature.

I awaited patiently. Months passed and having achieved my objective, was about to set out to Netherlands when my dear father passed away two days prior to my scheduled day of departure. He was then living at our ancestral house at Unawatuna. I postponed the trip and spent two weeks on the funeral ceremony and the alms-giving that followed and after two weeks returned to Colombo. A week later I flew to Netherlands. By 1972 June 19 th we were able to set up our training institute whose objectives ran as follows,

1. Imparting a training in development to youth who had left school and then engaging them in collective voluntary jobs.

2. Ingraining a development educational approach and providing opportunities for short term training to school children, University students and other segments of students

Photo 30 -
Women cleaning the harvest of Tanamalwila

3. Providing opportunities to officials of State and non-state organizations desirous of a Sarvodaya training to achieve it
4. Training community workers for Sarvodaya villages.
5. Building up a samma vasa (model village) on democratic principles based on a collective sharing economy within the framework of a spiritual and cultural syndrome indigenous to us
6. Initiation of a rural university with a focus on spiritual mores to generate technologies that approximate to our local needs and distribute this knowledge among our villagers.

Photo 31 -
Mr. Jan Pronk, Netherlands Minister who visited Tanamalwila

Photo 32 -
Mr. Ronnie de Mel at Tanamalwila

This is the Tanamalwila song composed by residents of Tanamalwila.

Fresh flowers bloom and emit fragrance
Butterflies fly in winged freedom
Hope springs eternal
It is our land of fortune
Our oasis, our great farmland//

The sky and the earth meet here
In an azure border
The emerald of the farmed land spreads
Flames spring from charred chenas
And balm the eyes

Our strength flees sorrow, it is the strength of youth
Our life veers on dhamma
This is the University
That forms us and the world
This is the shelter of Tanamalwila.

Let us spread humane qualities
All over the world
Let Sarvodaya banish want and ignorance
And spread radiance
Let us spurn false values
And avoid falsehood
Let us value simplicity
And build up a dhamma society
And rejuvenate our island
Let virtues surface and bring in a new dawn
Let gifted sons and daughters again be born
Let our country be blessed

Fresh flowers bloom and emit sweet fragrance//

Composed by **Premnath Jayatileka**

Ode to Kanda Surindu

God Kanda Surindu !
He is fascinated by the spledour of Tanamalwila
And blesses us
Protecting us eternally //
This is the path
That leads to awakening of all
To the awakening of farmers and labourers
The very perfect path
God Kanda Surindu

Let us energize our limbs
And build up great farmlands
Just as in days of yore
Into the country's progress we weld

God Kanda Surindu !

Into the new technological age we veer
But we are treading old paths
Under our own banner
God Kanda Surindu
The battle field the farm land
This is the fertile land
Of Ruhuna

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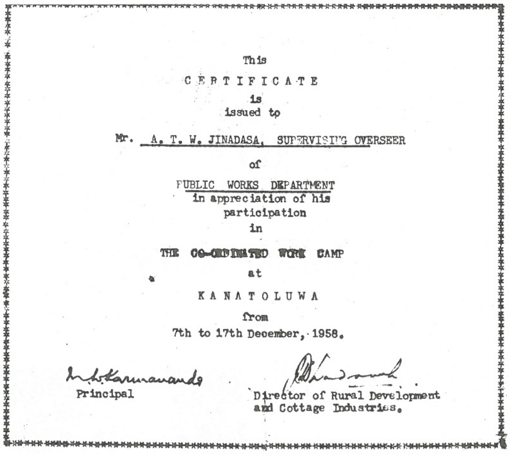
Malli’s story

Photo 33 -
Mr. Weera Jinadasa

Weera Jinadasa is my only brother. From my small days I loved him. He too not only loved me but respected me more as a teacher, than as a brother. If I make a request to him even if it inconveniences him he would fulfill it. When he sailed to England, it was as if a part of me was drifting away. He is 3 years younger to me.

In 1958 when the Kanatoluwa camp was in full swing, I invited him to put a week’s leave to give us technical advice. At this time he was working as a technical officer in the Public Works Department, specifically building up the Panagoda Army camp. It was he who began work on constructing a road alongside the tank bund in Kanatoluwa and also commenced work on the shrine. Actually it is not wrong to state that he cut the first sod of the Kanatoluwa camp.

From 1966 onwards for many years, it was the £15 that he sent that covered the rent of the Sarvodaya office and the house we lived in. In 1970 when I went to England I gave him only 48 hours to draft the plans of the building of the Youth Leadership Centre. If not for the help it would have been impossible to submit that plan to NOVIB. Two years later when I again went to England I told him that though much expense was incurred in the Tanamalwila project, the outcome was parallely not fruitful. Meanwhile along



This
CERTIFICATE
is
issued to

Mr. A. T. W. JINADASA, SUPERVISING OVERSEER

of

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
in appreciation of his
participation
in

THE CO-ORDINATED WORK CAMP

at

KANATOLUWA

from

7th to 17th December, 1958.

M. W. Karunananda
Principal

Director of Rural Development
and Cottage Industries.

Photo 33.1 - Kanatholuwa Certificate received by
Weera Jinadasa

with his children born there – 6 year old Deepal, 3 year old Sahan and two year old daughter Samadhi and wife Kamala they came back for a 2-week vacation. To ensure they did not return to England I sent them a one-way ticket. But in May 1976 covering 8889 miles they came here in their Ford car. A week later he took charge of the Tanamalwila project.

From the commencement of the Sarvodaya movement to the launching of the Tanamalwila project, every project and every centre was under my personal supervision. Hence I was able to maintain a high standard philosophy-wise and principle-wise. As I felt that at Tanamalwila there was a fall in standards it was imperative that I station malli there.

There were many schemers at this time intent on exploiting connections with me to utilise the Tanamalwila resources and then banish me from the scene. Now malli's arrival was a vast stumbling block, and many were the ruses used to send him back. Malli himself describes the situation thus.

"When I came to Tanamalwila, not even 25% of the basic requirements for the physical structure were there. Farming activities had got going minus the basic facilities of transport, hydro supply, basic buildings and electricity. Valuable timber had all been razed before the land was taken over. The first error was the investment in a bulldozer. Following haphazard advice bulldozing the soil had led to dangerous soil erosion and, made the land infertile. There simply was no plan. Even the instructors had no clue. The 350 children were resident in a shed, inadequately fed and dressed and with no sanitary amenities. Malaria reigned. Those who had become leaders were not the intelligentsia, but the vociferous ones. They just gave loud orders to the inferiors. These loud-mouthed ones posed a threat to me too when I first came to Tanamalwila. These threats and challenges discouraged me so much that I took on an appointment as the Health Engineer of Amaco (American Arab Oil Co.) and from the airport informed aiya (elder brother) via Mr. Dassanaike of Sarvodaya Headquarters that I was flying to England.

Mr. Ton De Wilde of Netherlands on hearing this discussed matters with Dr. Sjef Theunis, Director of NOVIB and tried to induce me back on a promise of equipping me with all the assistance and a monthly salary of Rs. 60,000/-.

I refused the Rs. 60,000/- salary scale and opted for a COL allowance of Rs. 1000/- a month and again began work at Tanamalwila. From 1976 to 1988, I worked there under the stress of many abuses and challenges thrown my way. One of these loud-mouthed ones was a very corrupt man who was responsible for national cum international malpractices. He was correctly identified rather late. The 'clan' warfare within Sarvodaya was begun by him and his stooges. (They had cultivated the art of using the brains of the juniors and exhibiting the results as their own). While himself enjoying the privileges he was adept in undermining the workers who were sincerely devoted to the Sarvodaya cause.

One such person fed on the Sarvodaya only to betray it later. nationally and internationally. Once he sent a letter to me with a copy to my brother. Here is an extract from it.

"Your brother is one of the most powerful and spiritual leaders who emerged during recent times. You yet view him as I viewed him as an immature youth did, years ago. You have not realized how far he has travelled, and how extra-especial he is. Incidents and episodes in themselves have no value to him, since he looks at all issues based on an established idea and principle. He values mental freedom. We have to query what time is left for us to achieve what he has achieved. Hence we will have to execute many offshoots of his organization."

That was a subtle ruse to create division between my ayya and me. Despite all challenges like this for 3 1/2 years, I went on to build up the electric network, the hydro facilities, libraries, auditoriums, large halls for family gatherings, dormitories to house about 400-500, staff quarters and a road network. Then I executed a decision to conserve soil and water, and put up a bio-gas unit and planted valuable trees. The meal given to residentials that cost Rs. 6.87 cts from the onset I got reduced to Rs. 4 still giving a more nutritious meal. All their basic facilities were fulfilled.

Soya coffee production was begun for the first time. Here I would give two examples of the optimum simple technology I used and were demonstrated at Kataragama Gam Udawa.

Soya coffee to the value of Rs. 35,000/- was marketed here. Though a further project of producing polythene bags worth Rs. 50,000/- was envisaged due to sabotage it was given up.

In 1982 during the regime of Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, a shortage of cowpea was manifest. Mr. E.L. Senanayake was the Agriculture Minister then. We had 16 tons of cowpea with us. Officers of the agriculture unit in Hambantota district having heard this, approached us and requested them at Rs. 16 a kilo. Our price was Rs. 17, and they agreed to it if we do the required purification. As we had a purifying machine we asked them to come the following morning. They wished to see it but since we had no patent rights to it I refused. Next morning the cowpea was rid of all barren seeds – that came to about 3 sacks. Amazed they asked me whether our machine was fuelled by diesel or petrol. I replied that it worked through 'malu paan' because what I had done was to employ about 400 children, group them, get them supplied with 'malu paan' (bread sandwiched with fish) topped by a cup of plain tea.

One person was responsible for trying to disenchant Weera malli with the whole executive council and me. But he still continues to live in his ashram at Wellawaya having done his duty and still in social service.

Though attempts were made to get rid of both Weera and me, the Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha, rest of the clergy and brethren of Sarvodaya stalled that attempt.

I wish to establish Sarvodaya on confidence and ethics, giving second place to methodology. Weera malli never relinquished deference to parents and elders and other ethical mores. Much more than those who lead princely lives after betraying Sarvodaya, Weera malli today deserve my respect and affection.

I took pains relating all this to show that if not for saboteurs Sarvodaya would have reached our total populace two decades ago.

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Begin 'Kutumbodaya' from home

'*There is a woman behind every successful man*' is a popular axiom of yore. (By 'woman' here is connoted a wife or mother.)

What is the truth surfacing from this axiom? What exactly does it mean?

According to Sarvodaya terminology, this is what we evaluate as 'Kutumbodaya' or the family awakening. It is also synonymous with 'Dawn of the family'.

Here I would relate an incident I read recently as it is relevant to our topic and supplement it much. It was based on the biography of Mr. Henry Ford, a multi-millionaire, owner of Ford Company in USA. A ceremony commemorating 10 years of establishing this company had been held at a super class hotel in America

Photo 34 - With my wife Neetha

to which major businessmen, ambassadors, journalists and other social dignitories had been invited. One journalist here had queried, "Dear Mr. Ford, what was the factor that monitored this vast progress of yours?"

Mr. Ford had been sipping a glass of lemonade on a chair close by. Near him was seated his wife in a simple light blue frock with a bouquet of roses in her hand. All eyes were on Mr. Ford now.

He got up slowly, bowed to the journalist cum audience and raised his glass of lemonade and announced, "One factor of my success is this" and then pointed at his smiling wife and declared "Other factor is this".

Everybody had clapped in applause to demonstrate their respect to Mrs. Ford. Mr. Ford had given a simple and apparently humorous reply. But there was an intense depth in his answer.

Though Henry Ford was a multi-millionaire who led a luxurious life, he was a non-alcoholic, who took only fruit juices. He was of the view that alcoholic drinks only led to a human's degeneration. By focussing on the glass of lemonade, he demonstrated his idea. Then by focussing on his wife, he was demonstrating our own 'Kutumbodaya' hypothesis, that of the 'Dawn of the family.' Mr. and Mrs. Ford led a very exemplary family life. Their mutual attachment, peace and confidence affected positively their lives plus business enterprise. Thus Ford epitomises the saying 'That behind every successful man is a woman'.

This incident amply substantiates my own idea on the subject. Had that couple lived estranged, quarrel-some lives, not only their conjugal bliss but the business would have been ruined. Now you can understand why I stress on the value of 'Kutumbodaya'.

At the outset I focussed on the contribution of a wife and a mother to a person's development. Our own annals supply examples. King Dutugemunu's victory was mainly caused by the guidance of his mother. It was from my childhood I was aware of the value of Kutumbodaya. I was domiciled in a rural environment life nurtured by Buddhism. It had a setting where every activity was regulated by the solidarity of the family unit and by social unity. From my young days I was acclimatized to the habit of obtaining

Photo 35 - With relations of both parties (only a section here)

the advice of parents and elders in what I did and also let them be aware of my deeds. Not only my parents but my uncle and aunts, Siri aiya (my cousin), my elder and younger sisters, were all made aware of what I did. They in turn gave me ideas, considering my deeds meritorious deeds. As they themselves were fed on Buddhist culture they blessed me and always helped me, supporting me in my onward march.

When I first began the fibre workers' Coir Co-operative Society, I remember father giving me Rs. 1000/- to pay their wages. My mother accompanied me to my first shramadana camps, cooking and even partaking in shramadana with much relish.

The Jaffna Neerveli Kaithadi camp I yet remember. The Tamils were enamoured of my mother. My Punchi akka too joined in these camps.

My baappochchi (younger brother of my father) invested his talents and composed the songs, verses, documents and books required for our movement. He compiled the biography of Acharya Vinobha Bhave into a book titled 'Sarvodaya Guide' and contributed many articles to the Sarvodaya newspaper. A set of verses he composed is yet with me and appears at the end of this chapter. He used to live in our House under the Breadfruit tree escorted my eldest daughter Charika to and from school. When my punchi akka, Lalana Chulalatha, Neeta and I were abroad, it was he who looked after my children in the house and at Meth Medura. My malli Weere gave up a luxury life in England to devote his life to Sarvodaya and my younger sisters too became devotees.

We had a jeep then, numbered 5 Sri 1106. Neetha, my children and I used to drive to our camps in this. After the day's work, we used to sleep on verandas, in tents and school buildings, not for days, but for weeks. Social service became an integral part of our lives.

Why did I dwell on such personal details? To demonstrate the value of Kutumbodaya, to show that it has to generate from the family itself. Some inclined towards social service in the process forget their parents, wives, children and siblings. This hinders not only the work in hand but banishes the altruistic enjoyment one is entitled to. So I was very careful here.

But another factor needs attention. Though it is advisable to court the help of relatives and friends in Kutumbodaya, that one must go about it in a reticent way. When a movement is forging ahead there are many who get attracted to it, not by its philosophy but by selfish motives. Such people have been a deterrent to us. I have suffered much from such people whom I accepted first due to friendship and relationships. You should learn an example from this. Even politicians personally acquainted to me have suffered from this malaise. This is the last point I stress on.

Photo 36 - With my six children, two grandchildren and Neetha

Gods reign in service

'Theng tejasa bhavathu the Jayamangalani'

In the way we slash forests and burn,
Then clean the earth of rubble,
And prepare the land for cultivation, so our minds
Should be rid of all defilements completely.

Prospering and parallely despising poverty
Getting disheartened by lack of national wealth
Hankering after collecting things,
And relishing in human divisive factors

It is good to be rid of pride
Spawned by riches and education
And be compassionate towards
The poor members of our society.

If a meritorious one helps the sick
out of Metta,
He is putting into practice
What the Great One preached.

If you build a road or well
as a help to the village,
If you donate a land
Remember you have taken part in Bhoodhana

Those who put up the 'Shramadana, Shanthi Sena camps
of Sarvodaya in the villages
Do yeomen service
And plant seeds of peace

In the way the Great Vinoba Bhave advocated,
'Let the young peace minded youth
work in their motherland
And douse the sorrows of the poor.'

By A.T. C. Jinadasa,
Talawakele

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NOVIB

NOVIB patronised Sarvodaya for a long period, supplying many of our basic resources. NOVIB stands for Netherlands Organization for Development Co-operation. There were three organizations in Netherlands at this time that got aid from the state and public.

Two were Sebemo and Echo who limited their aid to Christian institutions. NOVIB followed by HIVOS were two agencies that transcended such divisions.

Mr. Gerard Van Vlijman, the First Secretary-General of NOVIB made my acquaintance when he visited Sri Lanka at the

Photo 37 -
NOVIB Director Dr. Sjef Theunis at Sarvodaya

Photo 38 -
Dr. Sjef Theunis surveys an agricultural well in a village

end of 1968. He requested me to meet him when I come over to Netherlands. Accordingly when in 1969 I attended the FAO Conference in Belgium, I went to meet him at NOVIB headquarters in the Hague. Here I made friends with his younger staff Leny Nuijens and Lia Nuijens and several others. On their invitations I delivered lectures on the Sarvodaya Movement in Dutch schools.

Around 1975 Van Vlijman and Leny resigned from their posts. They were two great humans and even after that whenever I visited Netherlands I met them. Now Dr. Sjef Theunis, a developmental philosopher of high calibre replaced them. Soon from friends we became brothers. His period of administration was the golden age of Sarvodaya. He in turn visited us 2 or 3 times and used to traverse distant rural areas with me. Soon there resulted a very close link between NOVIB and Sarvodaya. Together, with the aid of other countries we staged several international conferences under the theme ‘Co-operation and Development’.

From 1971 to 1977 NOVIB helped us in the following – the developmental educational institute at Tanamanwila, Recurrent loan scheme, Pre-school and community kitchen program, aid to school children, helping estate workers returning from Talaimannar to India, services for aid to estate workers, Vishvodaya International Conferences, aid for victims of cyclone and floods, legal

Photo 39 -
Members of NOVIB Dialogue Commission

and welfare unit of Sarvodaya, and publication of 'Revolution Under the Breadfruit Tree' by Gunadasa Liyanage.

From 1977 to 1985, an annual allocation was made by NOVIB to execute above projects Sjef Theunis went on to form a 'Commission of Dialogue' to carry out an effective dialogue about these and monitor the formulation of objectives, evaluate and carry out research. Five meetings were held by this commission between 1977 and 1982, linking NOVIB and Sarvodaya very firmly. Each had much experience in developmental co-operation. NOVIB also supplied food and milk powder to Sarvodaya.

Other than Dr. Theunis, those who helped us much were Mr. Peter Vanzanvoort, Prof. Igle Ronner, Prof. Fritz Bouman, Prof. Jan Ferhe, Paul Clapper, and Peter de Haan. Mr. Ton De Wilde became a resident of Sarvodaya to help us.

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Sarvodaya Act in Parliament

By 1972, Sarvodaya Shramadana Society had aged 14 years. A total of 1308 Shramadana camps had been held in the country and 1,98,998 personnel had worked in them. Unlike now the infrastructure in villages was under-developed. Even roads did not exist, nor did state aids bolster the rural sector. Hence the brunt of work was done by the more active Sarvodaya workers and its followers.

In contemporary times, countries were exhibiting interest in educational projects and aligned developmental projects. At this time I got a chance of visiting the International Development Research Centre of Canada. I met its Chairperson Mr. Ivan Head, and invited him to select a few Asian countries and hold a research into their study services. Acceding to my suggestion, he summoned the Asian delegates, as a result of which a discussion was held in the Philippines Development Academy at Tagete City, Philippines.

But I could not attend this meeting and sent as delegates Ven Dr. Hevanpola Ratanasara Thero of our Executive Council and Mr. Chandra H. Zoysa. We got a very good response. The duo of delegates volunteered to submit a report of our study programmes and also submitted a fresh proposal, whereupon the IDRC had not only accepted it but was kind enough to release money to execute it

Photo 40 -
Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram

Now we embarked on the execution of this scheme. Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram, Director of the Research Unit of the Central Bank now volunteered to act as director of our unit. After office hours he used to visit us and advise us. Meanwhile Mr. M.U.A. Tennekoon, an officer of the Bank Research Unit took over the responsibility of the research. Within 1975-76 the project was completed due further to the endeavours of Mr. Sarath J. Herat and Mr. Sathis De Mel who worked as Senior Research Assistants and Mr. E.H.S. Fernando as Co-ordinating Officer.

For this research 80 villages out of the 800 that came under our service aegis plus 15 district centres were subject to. About 757 youth who served in these villages too were subject to survey. A very significant point that emerged out of the survey was Sarvodaya's potentiality in building up the future of jobless GCE OL and AL qualified youths and jobless graduates, via varied programmes. Such programs had already been created by Sarvodaya based on its wide experience.

Perusing the proposals I decided to set up a higher target, cognizant of the fattening number of jobless youths. A more wide-spread project covering more villages with tentacles spreading all over, I felt could completely eradicate the jobless problem of youths. Result was that I drafted a proposal to cover 5000 villages. But the giant dimension of the envisaged task made it necessary to solicit state aid and accordingly I met Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, then Minister of Rural Development and invited him to visit Sarvodaya and look over our programmes.

Photo 41 -
Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike addressing the Family Gathering at Meth Medura

Accordingly he visited us. Then he was the Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Administration and Home Affairs. We welcomed him warmly and he surveyed every programme of ours with interest. But he did not verbally declare anything. Though this gentleman is educated and intelligent, I sensed that he was arrogant too. It could be an innate trait in him. An incident that occurred in the Hall of the family gathering substantiated my intuition. It is the custom of participants in this gathering to remove their footwear when they enter the Hall and sit on mats. However, we had prepared a chair for the guest. But Mr. Bandaranaike walked in with his shoes which made everybody displeased with him. But I put on a good front since he was useful to us for our services. I managed to quell any protest from the clergy too.

However the help I expected did not come in the way I expected. But a bigger chunk of help followed i.e. that of getting through the Act of Parliament legitimizing Sarvodaya.

Though the particular Act had been presented by Mr. D.L.F. Pedris to the Senate its dissolution soon after meant its fresh presentation to the House of Representatives. Here for the benefit of readers I would give a small introduction to the procedure of submitting the Act to Parliament.

From the inception the Code of regulations that administered Sarvodaya had been formulated by me with Mr. Karunananda's aid and during the special meetings convened, alterations had been inserted by me. Now that it was to be submitted to Parliament, the draft of the Act was given to Mr. Walter Peiris, one of our Executive members who works in the Legal Draftsman's Department. Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Lawyer turned politician too volun-

Photo 42 -
Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali visits
Meth Medura

teered his help here. Since the Senate had already been dissolved the Act was directly submitted to Parliament. An Act of this calibre is usually not subject to debate. But since the Minister scheduled to present it was absent that day it was Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike who presented it. Since he had personally visited Meth Medura and had a first hand knowledge of our movement he evaluated our work highly and requested that the Act be passed without a debate. But Mr. A.C.S. Hameed, MP for Akurana and a member of the opposition rather jocosely stated that Sarvodaya Movement was begun in his electorate. Thus ensued a debate in which Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, Mr. D. Wimalasena and Dr. W. Dahanayake took part. They all made appreciatory remarks about Sarvodaya. (Note Hansard Report of March 22, 1972).

Finally Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike ended the debate thus:

'I will speak out the truth. Mr. Ariyaratne is a great man. I will not declare that only he can perform Shramadana nor do I intend to stall work of this nature of other organizations. Yet, let me give honour where it is due. Mr. Ariyaratne has expended his energy vastly and proved his ability. When we state that his energy and talents be tapped for national progress I will ask you to beat on your heart and ask why for 5 years of your government you could not recognize him? Where lay the fault? One faction says 'For God's sake get out'. But that does not bother us, For the common good of our country, I request you, be united and in the name of God indulge in Shramadana yourself'.

The Act was passed.

Photo 43 -
With Dr. W. Dahanayake

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Emergence of unwanted offsprings

The FAO Conference held in Netherlands in 1969 was the biggest such gathering I ever attended and served to eliminate fears and doubts lurking in me. That I was now in a stand to disseminate the Sarvodaya message to 1000s also boosted me. This representation of NGOs was provided to me as an Executive member of the World Assembly Youth. I inculcated in the audience the idea that no development could take place minus people's participation.

Many of those who deputised the UNO and various states, were put up in super class hotels. The invited guests were put up in University dormitories. Yet youth from myriad countries put up in an improvised habitat named 'New Earth Village'.

A board at its entrance attracted me. It read, 'We are the unwanted children of our parents'. Sporting Hippi culture and beards and long hair they were a cross section of any youth of the 60s of the affluent countries. But the slogan transpired the ruptured family structure of these countries.

I too visited this village frequently and took part in many a discussion of theirs and expressed my own views. Some desired books on Buddhism and meditation. I gave them such books that Mr. Albert Edirisinghe had given along with an English version of the Anapaṇa Sathi Bhavana done by Nauyane Ariyadhamma Thera and a book titled 'Metta' authored by Prof. L. G. Hewage.

Many of the youth were of the view that they were unwanted offsprings, an incidental result of the carnal desires of their parents. I sensed some truth in their utterance, but intending educating them elaborated the process of conception, the subsequent influences of mother on the foetus and factors guiding a child's infancy and childhood – all these ideas positioned according to Buddhism. Here my aim was to divert their minds from blaming their parents to focus on the momentum of these processes culminating in making their lives more meaningful.

They are aware that the reproductive cells of the parents amalgamate to result in conception. The total western culture in the aftermath of the medieval period was crafted on materialism, resulting in their viewing this world via a materialistic perspective. Other than a material amalgamation that a thought process enters the foetus was something difficult for me to explain to them.

How was I to explain to them that a karmic energy that acts as a conduit of *Paticca Samuppana* is encased in these cells from which spring a new life?

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Samudana

"Samudana" was the name given by me to No. 114 (earlier No. 100) the home we live in along Rawatawatte road of Moratuwa. Mr. Jinadasa Coperahewa, a teacher of St. Thomas College, Mount Lavinia once explained that this word occurs in *Anāgatha Vamsa Teēka* and was a synonym for shramadana in the Anuradhapura period. That as a collective body material was collected and the building put up led to the name 'Samudana'.

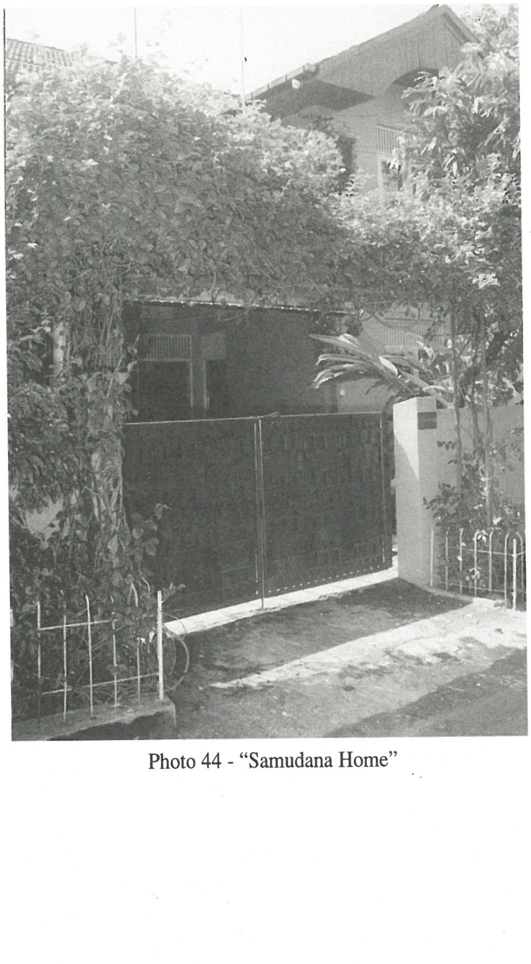

Photo 44 - "Samudana Home"

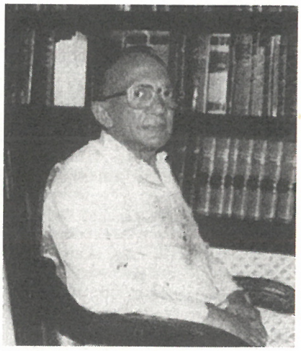

Photo 45 -
President's Counsel,
Mr. B.J. Fernando

'Samudana' faced the Rawatawatta road and was sited in the southern end of Sarvodaya premises. Before living here, we were living with a crowd of about 50, in our old Meth Medura. As our children grew up, Neetha began complaining that we need a private place but economic hurdles prevented my moving out.

When we bought Damsak Mandira, Mrs. Leela Jayasekera gifted money to Neetha to buy this plot of land. Yet others donated money and kind and initial work was done. But to finish it a loan from Bank of Ceylon was required and later the fee I earned as a UN adviser in Laos helped me to repay this debt and complete building the house.

As a mark of gratitude to all those who helped us and for the information of those who were out to undermine and demolish our work like the Wanasundera Commission, I insert the budget prepared in 1976, that show cases our expenses on this abode. That Neetha preserved these, shows her foresight and I thank her for it.

The Budget pertaining to building a house at No. 100 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa, belonging to Mrs. Neetha Ariyaratne

Income

	Rs.	
1974 Insurance Policy of her father	5000.00	
Sale of Refrigerator	2500.00	
Money in Bank	2250.00	
	180.00	9,930
Donations		
Nov. 30 Mr. M.W. Karunananda	300.00	
Dec. 8, Mrs. Jayasekera	5000.00	
Dec 19, Mr. J.B. Ratnayake	2000.00	
Dec. 23, Mr. Jayasekera	5000.00	
Dec. 26, Mr. Tissa Wijewardene	2500.00	
1975		
Jan 10, T.W. Ratnayake	10000.00	
Feb. 11, A. Ratnayake	2500.00	
Feb.26, M.W.Karunananda	700.00	
Mar 15, Mrs. Wijesekera	500.00	
May 5, Mr. Jayasekera	1700.00	
May 16, K. Dasanayake	636.00	
May 14 M.W. Karunananda	2000.00	
May 19, Mrs. Jaysekera	2002.50	
Dr. Nijhalt	5000.00	
Mr. Kiriwandeniya	1000.00	
Savings Bank	2000.00	
Bank loan	15000.00	
Mr. G.D.Wickramaratne	-	
Dr. Nijhalt	6180.20	
Mrs. Kahanda Liyanage	3000.00	
Mr. Weeraman Jinadasa	2000.00	69818.70
Materials donated		
Mr. U.N. Gunasekera (building materials)	6140.00	
Mr. R.A.Wijegunawardene (Timber)	500.00	
Mr. Sirinivasa (Timber)	300.00	
Mr. Wimalsena (Teak for the floor)	2000.00	
Mr. Berty Fernando (Timber)	1500.00	
Mr. Wanniarachchi (Bamboo)	1000.00	
Tudawe Brothers (Iron mesh)	1000.00	12440.00
Donations by Mr. Ariyaratne (11/2/1000)		18000.00
		110188.70

Expenditure

	Rs.
Cost of land	9750.00
Stamps duty for the deed	9930.00
Building Estimates and designing	325.00
Building Meterials	
Bricks, sand, cement, lime, granite, steel wire pipelines, bathroom fittings, kitchen fittings, S-lon pipes, doors, windows and their fittings, nails etc.	66614.42
Timber	
Doors, Windows, roof, ceiling, concret and rafters	9180.41
Electricity wiring	2418.30
Polishing, and Paints	812.70
Labour	
Masonry, Carpentry, and labour	15532.76
Transport charges	1642.00
Miscellaneous	1806.25
Income/Expenditure	1926.86
	110188.70

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An invitation to join in the Never-ending Revolution

Despite my perpetual travelling in and out of the country I put out literature to acquaint Sarvodaya staff of what was going on. Following is such a publication put out in August 1972.

Like everything else in the world, society too is always in a flux. This dynamic nature too varies in its changing aspect. At times the change reaches almost bursting point. Those with foresight then become alert to craft a new social order via a never-ending revolution. Now we are living in such an age. The country needs people who can herald this new revolution.

If a free election can be considered an apt criterion to judge the intellectual level and alertness of our average society then we can conclude that our people are mentally advanced to herald such a revolution. But the mere fact that they have taken correct and progressive political decisions do not insinuate that the historical work has been fulfilled or that the revolutionary aims have been realized. To effect a complete social revolution, the common man should be in the forefront. Gods are not visible in the kovil till crows are driven away. Likewise till darkness exists between the average populace and the revolution, the latter will not succeed.

The real revolution of the proletariat, is a dynamic attempt comprising 3 aspects. The first of these is the speeding up and ending the conflict between capital and labour and freeing the common man economically. Second comes the entrenchment of the inherent entitlement of people in government participation. Third is the elevation of the total population culturally. It is not the privileged class feeding on others' labour who should lead this trifold revolution but the populace who invest their own labour and intelligence.

Hence our belief that the full responsibility of our social revolution devolves on our working class. They should also be instilled with the dedication to eliminate social discrepancies for which again they should have an understanding of the real aims of the revolution. If non-equipped with these, their trudging blindly behind leaders is useless and they become faced with the dilemmas of betrayal, deception and disillusionment, that are the results of a counter-revolution.

The fact that labour has become a purchasable commodity has imposed the two anti-factions of bourgeois and proletariat. This severe dissension makes one-third of the country go hungry. Another one-third lives in doubt of the next day's meals.

A million families are housed in hovels. The labour vis-a-vis wealth situation has made the poor cringe under the meagre rich advanced culturally too. Again from the battle between the haves and have-nots have spawned social ills, thefts and robberies, joblessness 'youth tension' and many other factors of malaise.

The solution lies in transformation of the society from one of private ownership and competition to a society based on people participation and co-operation. Never would it be fulfilled via those of the capitalist class who only are loud-mouthed about issues.

The revolution would be a reality, if it springs from the non-privileged class proudly conscious of their impoverished state. Till the whole nation is retrieved from the grip of poverty leaders from such a section are imperative.

But a warning has to be given. If we, the poor, too harbour ideals that are veered towards capitalist thinking we will not become fitting leaders. We should be rid of the ills that disease the capitalist classes as shallow, seeking sensory gratification, attuned to luxury commodities, liquor and drunkenness, gambling and use of foul language. Till a man is trapped by riches, caste and power till a man is inhibited by capitalist thoughts he cannot be a real socialist.

Hence, were we to cultivate socialist personalities that are exemplary and worthy of others' respect and shed light on society hereby, not even atomic bombs can stop the energy released. They should also cultivate a discerning judgement between the worthy and the unworthy.

Today leadership of the nation has been entrusted to those more close to the average citizen. The people have given them a mandate to eradicate the bourgeois system in a harmless way. It is left to the working class to reform them if lapses occur. Other duties of this class are fattening the national productivity, eliminating deterrent factors arising out of private ownership and guidance in a just distribution of the national wealth.

Bureaucrats who performed the role of watchdogs of an unjust social order continue, their role. An officer is not a master of society, but its servant. The bureaucratic order that slaves under the top should be turned into an order that works for the common weal. Only a disciplined and bold community can effect this transformation.

There are enough socialists who zoom to high salaried posts to build up socialism, a phenomena common to every age. But true socialism would become a reality via those who run downwards into the melange of farmer, labourers and helpers and help them to rise. The never ending revolution would begin when true leaders, who dedicate their minds and hearts take leadership in economic, political and administrative arenas at all levels. So join in the never ending revolution.

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Bandaranaike Philosophy and Sarvodaya

Photo 46 -
Mr. Anura Bandaranaike speaking at the release of the 1st Volume of Bhava Thanha

"The connection between Bandaranaike family and Sarvodaya is a long standing one, running from the past. Hence at every significant moment like this, I feel my participation in it not only as the speaker but as a representative of the Bandaranaike family has been ordained by destiny."

That was a declaration made by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, then Speaker of the House, made on March 18th 2001 when officiated as the chief guest at the launch of "Bhava Thanha" 1st volume.

There is much truth in his statement. I yet remember a para from "The Wheel and the Field" (චක්‍රය සහ ගොයම් කෙත) published by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in the 1930 decade. It ended by stating that Sri Lanka is drifting towards Sarvodaya". I read this book after I began the

Sarvodaya Movement. He had made this statement even before I introduced the word Sarvodaya to my country. Reading it gave me much happiness, since I felt I had stepped into the correct path and that there was another national leader in our midst who had accepted Sarvodaya philosophy. It gave me a sense of affinity between Sarvodaya philosophy and Bandaranaike Philosophy.

But unfortunately in the second edition of "The Wheel and the Field" the sentence 'Sri Lanka is drifting towards Sarvodaya had been changed to 'Sri Lanka is drifting towards Socialism'. By this time as Mr. Bandaranaike was dead I was silent.

I had earlier mentioned the affinity between the two philosophies. What was the affinity? Actually the social scenario spawned in Mr. Bandaranaike's mind was the same Sarvodaya philosophy built on Buddhist and Gandhian teachings.

To be more explicit, an aim of Buddhism is going in search of those distraught by sorrow and fear and provide them solace. (Jesus Christ's invocation "Come unto to me those who suffer" gives almost the same idea).

Pali stanza giving this idea is:-
'Dukkappathaca niddukka - bhaya pattaca nibbaya
Sokapaththaca nissoka - hontu sabbepi panino".

We went ahead with the Sarvodaya Philosophy that Mr. Bandaranaike believed in that led to a philosophical connection between this family and me.

When our maiden camp was held in 1958 at Kanatoluwa, a message of good wishes was sent by Mr. Bandaranaike through Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. A very high born lady her visit to that so called low caste village created a social revolution. The connection began between us continued till the last stages of her life and I honour her for it.

Later on, when I became subject to attacks by those of her own party and from others, she looked after me and protected me. It was such a consolation to me. Hence I also felt that participation of Mr. Anura Bandaranaike at my book launch as the representative of HE President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Sunethra Bandaranaike was ordained by destiny.

I dedicated the 1st volume to the lady Sirimavo. After the Kanatoluwa camp, we always kept her informed of our activities. After she became Prime Minister, as she directed me to deal direct with her. There was no hindrance whatsoever from the state in our activities.

Later we commenced 'The 100 villages re-awakening movement' and held a flag day.

The message of good wishes sent by Mrs. Bandaranaike on this day i.e. October 23, 1970 transpires the confidence in us and the affection for us.

This was the letter she sent us:

> Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
> October 23rd, 1970
> Colombo.
>
> I am well aware of the gamut of activities carried in our villages by the Sarvodaya Movement. On behalf of my deceased husband, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike I participated in the general meeting held at Kanatoluwa. I was much impressed with the contribution made by school children to this venture. My husband was of the view that your movement is a very significant one that could nurture our country economically, educationally, socially, spiritually and healthwise. I also appreciate the dedication of your staff.
>
> I wish all success to the recently begun enterprise of "The 100 Villages Re-awakening Movement".
>
> **Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike**

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Frederich Naumann Stiftung

The Frederich Naumann Stiftung (FNS) of West Germany earns premier place among the institutions that helped in the progress of Sarvodaya Movement. The Damsak Mandira built in the 1970 decade and Pathakade Bhikkhu Training Institute are two symbols of its investment in our work. This Foundation was established to commemorate Frederich Naumann, the father of German Liberalism by Prof. Theodore Heuss of the German Federal Republic. At that time the headquarters was sited in the suburb of Bad Godesberg in Bonn city.

Its major education institute named after Theodore Heuss, organized educational services, conducted research into social and economic issues and organized national and international conferences.

International offices of this Foundation were established in Brazil, Chile, Peru, Tanzania, Morocco, Pakistan and India, etc. The Frederich Naumann Stiftung (FNS) assisted Sarvodaya from 1970 and Marga Institute from 1972, leading to a link between these two.

This assistance was due to two people. One was Mr. Piet Dijkstra. Once he worked in the FNS as its Programmes Officer. Second was Mr. Chandra H. Soysa. As both of them were my friends, Mr. Godfrey Wüst, director of international affairs of the Frederich Naumann Foundation, too became a bosom friend of mine. Names of all three should be etched in the saga of Sarvodaya.

It was imperative to train civic leaders for the 100 Villages Re-awakening Movement begun in 1967. Along with this, build-

Photo 47 -
Mr. Paul Bischof and Mr. Gottfried Wüst

ing of latrines, houses, community centres and manufacturing agricultural implements plus training of youth for self-employment became a dire necessity.

I requested necessary allocations from FNS. Amidst much obstacles I was able to get money released. At the outset, the money was spent on lodgings of residents, subsistence and purchase of machinery. Later we expended the money to build the Damsak Mandira, a complex at Pathakade Bhikku Training Institute and purchase of three vans and two motor cars.

As the 100 villages Re-awakening Movement forged ahead, not only the required youth leaders were trained by FNS help for

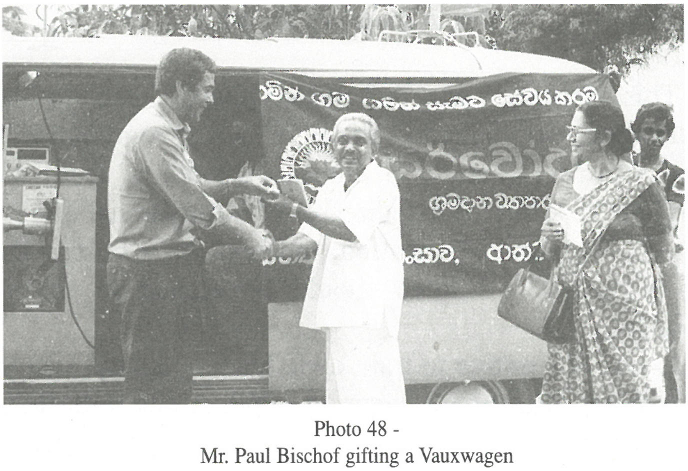

Photo 48 -
Mr. Paul Bischof gifting a Vauxwagen

Photo 49 -
Mr. Peter Pabst on left in background

the centres at Tanamalwila, Baddegama and Kandy, but it organized a network of Shramadana camps and provided all the resources.

A visit by Mr. Dijkstra and Godfrey Wüst to our headquarters and to observe our field work was a special event. They got an insight into the devoted work of our staff. This link became entrenched when I was invited to participate in a conference held in Germany from September 26, 1971 to October 14th. During this time special permission was necessary from PM to leave the country. I made use of this opportunity to participate in the UN Youth Conference held in Geneva and also to meet Sarvodaya groups in Belgium, England and Netherlands. Mr. P. W. Mahawatte joined me and I went onto Sweden too.

Meanwhile the visits of Mr. Peter Pabst and Mr. Wennemar Scherrer to Sri Lanka boosted us much. They co-operated with us very sincerely and their accounting, preparation of programme reports and survey of our building procedures led to a training exposure for our students. Thus was laid the foundation for organizing Sarvodaya self-employment courses.

Parallely with all this, I worked as a UN adviser and adviser of certain other institutes to sustain my family. As a UN specialist I got a chance to go to Laos and the money I received was spent on building our house. Even at this stage, villagers with technical know-how, and Mr. T.W. Ratnayake and Upali Senanayake had helped me in cash and kind.

Photo 50 - Mr. Wennemar Scherrer, Mr. Karunananda and Mr. Rasaputram

On the eve of 1975, we heard that a famous Sociology Professor of Germany by name Detlef Kantowsky was arriving in Sri Lanka to evaluate our progress.

Beginning from March 1974, he did a 6-week evaluation and reported that the community participation of Sarvodaya was at a very high level and endorsed that the FNS should help us more. Before his departure he addressed our Executive Council, praised us and became a member of the International wing of Sarvodaya. In the second half of 1975 his report strengthened our bonds. The services of his assistant Mr. Albright also merits mention. The FNS further helped in leadership training, Bhikku training, self-employment training, building of rural habitats and supply of vehicles. It also provided technical assistance.

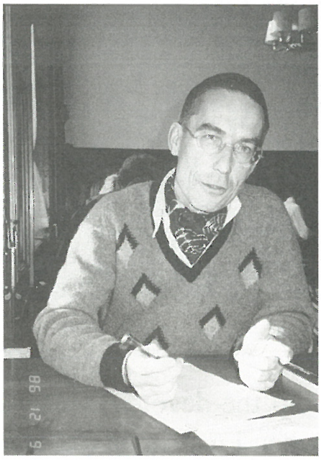

Photo 51 -
Prof. Detlef Kantowsky

Once on the request of FNS a representative group of ours embarked on a study tour of Germany. This group comprised Ven. Nedelagamuwe Jinananda, Mr. Sinha Perera of Nedalagamuwa, Mr. Albert Wijegoonewardene of Matugama and a group of MPs from the ruling party and opposition. Amongst the MPs were Mr. Jayawardena Attanayake, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Mr. Rajah Welegama and Mr. P.B. Wettawa.

The last deputy of FNS was Mr. Paul Bischof. During his time we could generously subscribe to the Gam Udawa Movement of Prime Minister Premadasa and the Million Housing Program. FNS - Sarvodaya co-operation went on for 12 years.

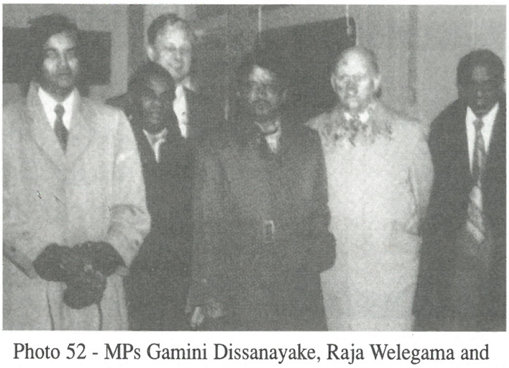

Photo 52 - MPs Gamini Dissanayake, Raja Welegama and Jayawardene Attanayake in Germany

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An attack on Sarvodaya by Minister of Justice

Subsequent to gaining our independence, the citizens mostly depended on the State for their development. We need not be surprised by the fact that during the colonial regime not only the format of rule but arenas of economy culture cum health were crafted to suit the needs of the rulers.

When talking of administration I do not believe in punishment, but in Jana Shakthi (people's power) Jana Neethi (people's law) and Dhamma Neethi (spiritual law). Were these 3 to amalgamate, punishment becomes superfluous. Yet a thin veneer of it is necessary. Yet no substitution of the present social matrix is contemplated. Hence though we are critical of the present system, we yet try to work within its framework, cognizant of the fact that sarvodaya members are law abiding citizens. That is social reality. Yet we will wage an ahimsa battle to change the injustices that contaminate the present system, that too after taking people into confidence. While presenting alternate administrative forms within the democratic framework we would work to activate their workings.

It was this which propelled me to work out a Janatha development programme with the support of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. As an aligned activity, I presented to Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike then a powerful minister, a program to uplift 5000 villages. It was he who had got the Sarvodaya Legislation Act passed through Parliament. Hence I was of the view he would support my proposal.

It was at this time I got a call from him one morning. He wished to see me immediately, at Hulftsdorp in the premises of the Justice Ministry. I concluded that he wished to discuss the 5000 village upliftment programme. I got into my red Mitsubishi Jeep (5 Sri 1106) and went there. As I was climbing the stairs I met the Government Agent, Colombo, Mr. Alwis coming down.

"The Minister is indignant with you. Why?" he asked smiling. I was surprised.

"I do not know, Sir. In fact I thought he wished to discuss a proposal submitted by me." Mr. Alwis did not answer.

As I could not discern any cause for his indignation I quipped. 'Maybe he left home after a row' and entered the Minister's room. A female, I surmised to be his Secretary, stood by the Minister seated at his table.

I courtesied to him and on his direction sat. Without speaking with me he began going through some documents, while I glanced about me. Several people were seated around me among whom only Mr. Pallewatte, Director of Rural Development was known to me. Villagers, probably from the Minister's electorate and 3 officers with black ties either from Security or Secret Police were there. All eyes were focussed on me.

Now the Minister began talking to me in English in a loud tone. It developed into a lecture embellished with gesticulation as one that would be made in a court of law or public meeting. Though first I was gazing at him, later as his voice grew louder I looked down, concentrated on my breathing and just listened bracing myself for anything.

The summary of his speech was this:

"I had been much pleased with you and your movement. Now disgust has replaced it. Sarvodaya has begun its activities in my electorate without my permission. That is wrong. No one can work in my domain without my permission. Under the guise of Sarvodaya many malpractices are taking place in our villages. Even brothels are functioning, I have been told, plus Kasippu dens and terrorist camps. I do not say that you are directly aware of these. May be you are in the dark about them. So I urgently need a list of villages where Sarvodaya functions and also a list of all your officers and government officers working in alliance with you along with their names and posts."

Much perturbed yet maintaining my composure I asked him the source of his information to which he instantly replied "Police".

"It cannot be. I met Mr. Ekanayake, ASP, Gampaha only last week. He was fully appreciative of our work".

"Not only he, even the GA has warned me."

I laughed.

"That cannot be. He is a friend of mine and just now we met on the steps where he told us you were indignant with me about something."

Just then the female there, whom I thought was his secretary, began her verbal attack.

"The girls and boys in our villages do not frisk around camp fires in the night and sleep under open skies. We cannot allow such villaneous acts to go on in our electorate."

Now I looked at her with interest. She looked above ordinary. Now I saw many junior officers of the minister looking at me with sympathy through window bars. May be they feared that the fate that befell the JVP leaders who came here recently would befall me too. I looked at the lady and said, "I came here to meet the Minister and not anybody else to answer others' accusations. Hence please be silent."

Now the minister handed me a letter.

Ministry of Justice,
October 7, 1947

Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne,
Sarvodaya,
Moratuwa.

Dear Mr. Ariyaratne,

I hope that you can recollect that it was I who gave you all the co-operation when you wished to get legal sanction for your Sarvodaya Movement through a Parliament Statute. The reason for my assistance was my belief that you were working in close alliance with our village reawakening movements. In fact I had asked all our government MPs to render you the maximum help.

However certain incidents during recent times have made me change my opinion of the Sarvodaya movement and I have begun to be skeptical of the genuine nature and objectives and aims of it. Here I present you some examples. You have not officially submitted to me details of the Sarvodaya personnel working in the Dompe electorate. It has been brought to my notice that one Akmon Goonetilleka, a resident of Vanaluwava and a teacher at Rajasinghe MV in the Avissawella electorate is the chief Sarvodaya organizer of my electorate. He is a supporter of the UNP and is a person that has no standing in the area. Never has the SLFP won less than 75 % votes in Dompe and so in this context he is weak. This said person, I have heard had got down boys and girls from villages on two occasions during the last two months and got them to lodge the night at Giridara school on the pretext of Shramadana work. The public has protested against these immoral activities and even complained to the AGA. In these activities Akmon's right hand has been one Nomis Perera who had been a teacher at Udupila school and now a trainee at Maharagama GTC. It may interest you to know that the moment the people got to know that Nomis is connected to Sarvodaya that they had banished him from all the village development activities. Karolis Appuhamy representative of the village committee at Dompe has publicly spoken against Sarvodaya and very soon the whole public will rise up against you. Weke AGA has already informed the Sarvodaya workers that he can uplift the area without Sarvodaya help.

In the areas of Hissella and Meethirigala organizations who call themselves Sarvodaya have mushroomed and in fact recently they had secretly got down 20 Tamil youths from Jaffna and had an underground meeting in the jungle terrain of Hissella in the style of Che Guvera activity. It is the Police who has been alert to this incident and reported it.

If this situation continues I will be compelled to criticize Sarvodaya within and outside Parliament. My wish is that

Sarvodaya leaders should be those endorsed by government. If otherwise, as Sarvodaya stands in danger of becoming a threat to the discipline of the country I will have to exercise my authority. So if you do not concur with my plan please inform me so by writing.

I ask you to stop Sarvodaya work immediately in my electorate and also in electorates where formal sanction has not been got from the State. Once I get a reply if necessary I will present the issue in Parliament. And I would be thankful if you supply me with a list of Sarvodaya personnel working through out the island".

Yours truly,
Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike

After reading the letter I stood up and decided to imitate the oratorical style of the minister. I said that I had intended to indulge in a cordial dialogue with him about the country's progress but instead I had been degraded and humiliated by the abusive speeches of the minister and the lady.

Then the minister introduced the female as his wife and private secretary. It was then I knew her to be Lakshmi Bandaranaike. I turned to her and expressed my regret for not recognizing her. Then I requested them to listen to me attentively and went on to consume the same amount of time the Minister took to explain the Sarvodaya philosophy, its structure and activities in the Dompe electorate. Then I said in a louder tone.

"I reject the letter you have given me and will not submit a reply. I regard you abusing me in this way without any prior inquiry into the complaints received as highly derogatory for a person like me who has dedicated his whole life to the country's welfare. Till now I had considered you as very intelligent and just as the damsel with blindfolded eyes holds the scales in her hand, a symbol who neutrally and sans prejudice exercises justice. Please realize even now that Sarvodaya works for the common welfare minus any eye on titles or Parliament seats or a frenzy to dominate others. We have no weak mentality and will never bow down to injustice. We are not thugs, but we are propelled by ahimsa, kindness and mercy and on behalf of these we are ready to be behind prison bars."

Actually my speech was not pre-planned but the words just gushed out. It was as if some invisible force propelled me. I did not think anyone else had addressed the minister thus. He looked utterly flustered.

The guise of the lion he had assumed was cracking. He laughed with difficulty and then stretched out in his seat.

"Mr. Ariyaratne, you seem to be excited. Just go home, relax and give me a reply. I thank you for coming."

I released a sigh through my nose. My mind had been catharsised via my outburst.

"Good, I am also sorry that I spoke like that before you two. Never before I spoke like this to anyone. Even here I had not intended to speak like this. But I was driven to it by your unjust accusations. I reiterate again I will not reply this letter. You are free to act."

I took leave of them formally and also of the Police officers and left the place.

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PM negates Minister's attack

Before I returned to Moratuwa that day the news of my friction with the minister had seeped into many a high nook and corner, a fact transpired through many calls received by me. I warned many Government speakers who spoke not to get entangled in Sarvodaya work till I inform.

A few days later I received a letter again from the minister asking me to meet him at 11 a.m. on October 11, 1974 at the Home Ministry. I just threw it away but on that very day at 11 a.m., the Minister's Secretary Mr. D.P.B.I. Siriwardene phoned me and said that the Minister was expecting me. I said that I am not coming, but that he could get an appointment with me and visit me at Meth Medura. I further said that Mr. Felix Dias was only a State Minister but that I was the Premier of Sarvodaya. The good hearted Mr. Siriwardene cajoled me to come but I ended the talk in a light vein and kept down the receiver.

It was declaring war against a mighty man of the ruling regime. The result of my non-meeting him, which I got to know later from Mr. Siriwardene, was that the Minister had requested him to send out a circular along with the following questionnaire to MPs.

1. Are you aware of the Sarvodaya work and organizations in your area? Who are its organizers?
2. Were the MPs apprised of the establishments of these units?
3. Do some of these activities predominate in some villages? What are the enterprises carried out in these? Who are its organizers?

4. Are there state officers who indulge in Sarvodaya in and out of office hours?
5. Do the MPs think that Sarvodaya work and its organizations are salutary for the people?
6. According to MPs assessment, how much money has the Sarvodaya invested in their work in these areas?
7. Should GAs, DROs and Land Officers and officers assigned to district administration partake in Sarvodaya work?

This circular led to the headline of October 19th 1974 Dinamina on its first page titled 'An investigation into Sarvodaya'. It was the biggest attack so far launched on Sarvodaya and certainly tainted the reputation we were known for. But undaunted I decided to face any obstacle. One evil result is that a few deserted us, out of fear of that all powerful minister. But here I must mention a duo who remained our steadfast friends. One, Mr. Chandra Soysa, Director of Marga Institute and the other, the famous newspaper man, Mr. Gunadasa Liyanage. The article that appeared in 'Sinha Kodiya' edited by him on November 20, 1974 was a very bold analysis of the situation we were plummeted to.

Felix, Tudor, Birthday and the Bucket

Within the majestic precincts of Colombo Fort, to one of its judicial kings Mr. F. R. Dias, was born on November 5, 1930 a prince who was named Felix Reginald Dias.

The following year on the same day to a businessman and contractor named A.T.H. Jinadasa who was living in Pansala Pahala Gedera at Peellegoda, Unawatuna in Galle, was born a boy who was named Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne.

Felix Dias studied at Royal College and across the University of Ceylon and Law College catapulted to become a very capable lawyer and ended up as an advocate of Hultsdorp.

Tudor Ariyaratne read his first letter at Peellegoda temple, studied first at Unawatuna Buddhist mixed school, crept through copses of *Dan* and *Boviti* and also through Meddekanda Buddhist Mixed School at Balangoda and then at Buona Vista and Mahinda

Colleges at Galle. In this pursuit of knowledge once not having money to buy a book, he jumped into the sea but was saved by someone and later entered Maharagama Government Teachers' Training College and became a teacher.

Eventually the first relinquished his law profession and zoomed to a top niche in politics not only as Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs but also as Minister of Justice.

The second too resigned from a well-paid teaching post traced the path of Vinoba Bhave, invested his full time in the Sarvodaya Shramadana and began to resuscitate fallen villages and underwent much toil and troubles in jungles infested with mosquitoes. Braving enmity he forged ahead to win fame to Sri Lanka by winning the Magsaysay Award. Provision of jobs to thousands of our jobless youth was another feat of his.

The wife of the first worked behind his husband like his very shadow helping him in his political career. Likewise the second's wife too toiled hard to further husband's social service work.

The first is tall, sturdy and of majestic looks. Second, short and placid. Through this placid demeanour surfaces a majestic and efficient veneer. The first is always smoking a pipe. The second too does so with the aid of a gifted one, but he uses it only at home and that too once or twice a day.

Last week they both held their birthday parties on November 5. First is 45. Second is 44. Hence they can be titled 'Birthday Boys'.

The first birthday boy, sprang a bucket on the second birthday boy recently. Are there clandestine aims in the Sarvodaya Movement? How is foreign aid used? Is Sarvodaya salutary to the country? Or detrimental? The bucket thus toppled raises these issues.

'Bucket' is actually a fitting word for this catastrophe that could crumble the Sarvodaya progress. Yet we must not forget that the state has a right to be investigative of what goes on in the country'.

On December 10, 1974, the MP for Nuwara-Eliya, Mr, Gamini Dissanayake raised the issue in Parliament. A debate between him and Minister Bandaranaike ensued in which

Ratgama MP, Mr. M.G. Mendis too intervened replying a lengthy critical speech of Sarvodaya. It was a completely political speech. He even attacked Shri Jayaprakash Narayan of India, for the connection with the Indian Sarvodaya Movement.

Mr. Bandaranaike reminded the House of his meeting with the PM on an earlier date which was a true incident. Here I give an account of it.

On Publication of the earlier mentioned article in Dinamina Ven Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero met us and then rang PM Mrs. Sirimavo and got a date for discussion. Accordingly a group of five met her, the group comprising Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero, Ven. Dr. Hevanpola Ratanasara Thero, Prof. A.D.P. Jayatileke, Mr. M.W. Karunananda and myself.

Representing the State were Mr. Neil De Alwis, Deputy Minister of Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Stanley Senanayake, Chief of Police, Public Trustee, Barnes Ratwatte, Private Secretary of PM, Mr. Dharmasiri Peiris and Mrs. T.U. de Silva, a friend of the Premier. The latter sat just near the PM.

The discussion lasted one and half hours and Mrs. Sirimavo listened patiently to it all. Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero spoke on the threat made by the Minister to me and also the subsequent circular and asked whether Ariyaratne cannot serve the country he was born in. When her husband was living these characters as Mr. Felix were exorcised individuals and blamed Madam for opening doors to them.

After questioning me too on the prelate's speech, the PM made the following declaration. 'This Minister has taken this without consultation with me or with the Cabinet, but has just acted autocratically. He is not here, but only his deputy here. I order my private secretary Mr. Peiris to directly co-ordinate Sarvodaya work hereafter to the PM's office. Keep me informed of any issue that arises and go ahead boldly with your work'.

Out of the hundreds of MPs in the House, only 17 had replied to the Minister's directive and here too no one had criticized the Sarvodaya. Moratuwa MP, Mr. Wimalasiri De Mel in fact had written back a reply eulogizing Sarvodaya and stating that the movement sited in Moratuwa was a pride to the city.

I feel that the strained relations between Mr. Felix and me was either that he had formed a wrong opinion of me or had been prejudiced by wrong information supplied. I was optimistic that he would realize the reality of it all. He certainly had very good qualities, the promptness with which he sent replies to official letters despite the misunderstandings.

A Shakespearean advice, boosts me in times of crisis, which reads as follows:

'Be vigilant before getting into a fight. And do not forget to corner your adversary into a state of being vigilant about you,"

Following this I averted as much as I could, not to ignite any spark that could lead to another conflict with the Minister. I stopped all work at Dompe and withdrew all Sarvodaya workers from the seat, informing him of all this, by letters written very respectfully to him and his wife. Even after these tactics failed, I took up the challenge.

My first challenge was my refusal to see him when summoned. Second, was to expose the injustice meted to me before the ruler of the country and the public. Eventually the second path succeeded.

Long after these events were orchestrated I met him at a conference at Marga Institute. We spoke cordially. He seems to have forgotten all bitter memories of the past.

His sudden death saddened me. I went to his house to pay my last respects and to express my condolences to his wife.

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The Ban of Sarvodaya at Dompe

The Sarvodaya work that was carried out very successfully in Dompe seat was halted in October, 1974 on a directive of the Dompe MP cum Justice Minister, Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike and his wife. It later came to light as a result of an investigation of mine that the attitude of these two was a result of the supply of wrong information by a few of their political stooges.

My mind has been untramelled by the myriad obstacles that came the way of Sarvodaya path since its inception. By this time the movement had spread its tentacles throughout the country. Its success owes to those equipped with leadership qualities nourished by an intense understanding of Sarvodaya philosophy. These were my finds, human treasures who then went over to villages to activate many of its denizens.

In my selection I transcended barriers of race, caste, creed and political affiliations and used one criteria i.e. their efficiency, honesty and character.

With regard to Dompe, I followed the same procedure and selected apt leaders. Three, I yet remember ie. U.A.E. Gunatileke of Vanaluwava, A.K. Somadasa of Giridara and Premaratne Ratnasuriya of Hisselle. (Why their names were etched in my memory, you may come to know later). They were of exceptional leadership ability. Social service was injected into their blood, I felt or bodily annexed. The service they rendered via the Shramadana camps as road building, repairing schools and conducting pre-schools was of indescribable magnitude. We only had to supply guidance, from headquarters and even the necessary resources they found for themselves.

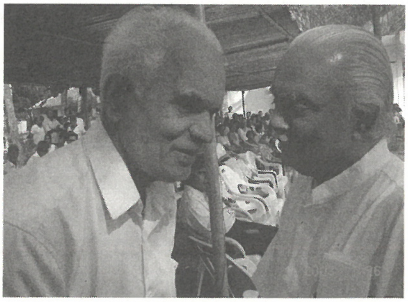

Photo 53 -
Mr. U.A.E. Gunatilake at a recent meeting

The results of their sacrificial work was soon manifest. The villages progressed with amazing speed. A stretch of roads sprang and school playgrounds emerged. Villages worked more in unity. This village transformation earned the Sarvodaya leaders much respect, that the political figures never received. But surprisingly in these very villages were segments who hated what was going on. They were much averse to our district leader and were actually political partisan-minded persons. I had advised our leaders never to let party politics enter the Sarvodaya matrix and they followed this advice to the letter.

This led the antoganists to view our activities with suspicion, with which situation I was apprised, made me counter-advice to go on with their work with a state of mind tinctured by *Ahimsa* and *Maitree*.

But what finally happened? The condition became more vicious. Abuses against us proliferated. Even abusive pamphlets were distributed. However direct conflict was averted.

As the most powerful figure in the area, MP and Minister ie. Mr. Felix R. Bandaranaike himself began to criticize us in public and as police interrogations too became frequent, fear drove the villagers to drift away from us. Though the Sarvodaya youth went on undaunted even their work flagged due to strong political factors. Finally it all culminated with the Minister almost banning our activities.

We did not rise against the law, but maintained our composure accepting our defeat too. What was the outcome?

Mr. Bandaranaike not only lost his ministerial post at the next elections but lost his seat too. With me are the three letters that transpire the dictatorial campaign those political giants carried on against Sarvodaya. These letters written by the abovementioned trio of Sarvodaya workers ie. Gunatileke, Somadasa and Ratnasuriya and addressed to the Minister run as follows and reflect not only the vicious side of party politics but the birth pangs of our conflict.

At this juncture I also mention with all deference the following personnel who acted as our gallant warriors in our conflict with the Minister – Ven. Pandit Hissella Gnanawimala, Ven. Ganegama Saranankara Panditha Thero, Ven. Pandit Neluwe Gunananda Thero, Ven. Vanaluwave Paggnasiri Thero and Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe.

1st Letter

U.A. Gunatilaka
Wanaluwawa
Dompe.
20.10.1974

Hon. Minister of Public Administration
Local Government, Home Affairs
and Justice
Colombo 7

Hon. Sir,

1. According to your instructions all Sarvodaya work from 8.10.74 has been declared closed in Wanaluwawa.
2. One reason that motivated to initiate Sarvodaya in this village was your acknowledgement of the movement as a development wing in this country due to the large volume of work done during the last 1 1/2 years, as given below:
    - i. A large part of government expense was saved.
    - ii. The agriculture programme was intensified.
    - iii. The poverty-ridden farmers progressed materially and spiritually.

      I have detailed these facts in my letter to Mr. Ariyaratne
3. i. I have always mentioned the Hon. Minister's name with respect at every Shramadana camp.
    - ii I have been a supporter of the SLFP, our Sarvodaya work has actually strengthened the SLFP

4. We always have notified the AGA of major shramadana work and invited you to grace especial occasions.
5. We have co-operated in all state functions, and even helped in cash. I have sent representative bodies to help in public work and never sought personnel help. I have expressed the value of Bandaranaike principles in our meetings and held commemoration ceremonies on a grand scale.
6. As extremely false information has been conveyed to you by a person or persons this would never have beneficial results on you or your party. What they had in mind were the objectives of

    i. Perpetuating the use of liquor, gambling and thefts in the area.
    ii. Escalating dissension
    iii. Misappropriating the co-operatives

    They further relished paving way for the downfall of the youth of the village by blocking job-avenues.

7. If financially evaluated the work done during the last 2 years by us costs Rs. 50,000/-. Since the foundation of Sarvodaya and Buddhism are the same a moral and law-abiding citizens grew up. The Rs. 2000/- loan and investments to the value of Rs. 628/75 were procured from Sarvodaya and effectively made us leading to poverty alleviation of the farmers. The debt too was repaid.
8. Via this work, the villagers were pleased with you since you patronized Sarvodaya.
9. I expect you to investigate into the actual state of things crafted falsely by jealous and selfish tale carriers.

Yours truly
U.A.E. Gunatilaka
Hon. Secretary

copy to: Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne

Letter 2

Giridara, Kapugoda
12.10.74

To: MP for Dompe, Hon. Minister of Public Administration,
Local Government, Home Affairs & Justice
Mr. Felix R.Dias Bandaranaike

Request for an investigation

Hon. Minister

Within Giridara village in Dompe seat, a Sarvodaya Shramadana reclaimed a stretch of Kottegoda road from floods. Cut the foundation for the laboratories of Giridara Government school and are almost completing the widening of the Giridara - Mahaweli road upto a stretch of 1/2 a mile. These ventures that saved the state about Rs. 25,000/- were possible due to food supplied by villagers plus land donation.

Dompe Police has started investigations into our work as a consequence of opportunists trying to present our organization as a Che Guvera movement. As this has generated displeasure of villagers and character assassination of our organizers I entreat you on impartial inquiry.

A.K. Somadasa
copy:- Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Headquarters
Meth Medura, Moratuwa.
for information.

Letter 3

Sarvodaya Youth Gathering
Hissella,
12.10.74

MP for Dompe
Minister of Public Administration, Local Government,
Home Affairs & Justice
Hon. Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike

Cessation of Development and education work in Hissella

Hon. Minister,

This is pertaining to the letter sent by Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne, Hon Organizing Secretary of Jathika Sarvodaya Sangamaya addressed to you with a copy to me.

After getting this letter, I, as the Chairman of the relevant society issued a directive ordering the immediate cessation of Sarvodaya activities in the area. In addition to legalise the cessation I convened members and made a formal declaration. I had invited Weka AGA to this occasion, but the GS of the area represented him. Under these circumstances the death bell of Sarvodaya in our village was rung.

The very fact that you were responsible for getting the Parliament statute of legalizing Sarvodaya through had bolstered us to do much service. Now to comply with your wishes we have ended it.

Yet according to para 4 of Mr. Ariyaratne's letter the very significant enterprises we began need to be continued under some agency. Here I seek your instructions. The basic needs for these have been supplied already by Sarvodaya. Details of these ventures are given hereby.

1. Running a pre-school under the new educational theories (School equipment and food had been provided by Sarvodaya, and a teacher appointed by same)

2. Running a kitchen (food for malnourished children and mothers has been supplied while milk food and codliver oil too have been provided)
3. Sarvodaya farm - a loan of Rs.19,000/- had been obtained from headquarters to pay a subsistence allowance of Rs.14/- to workers in this area and Rs. 7250/- has already been spent. The cultivations on the farm include manioc, paddy, kurakkan (millet), oranges, plantains and 'batala' (sweet potatoes)
4. Shramadana (for especially Shramadana money, equipment and labour has been given from headquarters).

If all this work was to cease, as it entails, a big loss to the villagers, please see that the Village Development organisation, or a branch unit of the SLFP take them over and run them.

I have to further notify you of an important matter regarding a declaration of you and your media about the letter to Mr. Ariyaratne. He requested me to meet him and asked two questions.

1. Are you running a brothel in your area? Or do you supply prostitutes? Do you indulge in illicit liquor (Kasippu) trade?

The pain caused to me who always exerts to maintain a pure spiritual ethos, was unlimited. When I asked him as to the reason for such queries, he said that two of you had introduced me as such a character. I am very sorry about this contamination.

By legacy and birth I am a SLFP and played a leading role in the organisation of the last General Elections, a fact you are aware of. During the UNP regime as a political victim I was transferred to Jaffna in retaliation for giving my land for you to stage a meeting and helping to build a stage. As a poor clerk even when UNP held the reins, I think you are aware how I extended my optimum services for your sake. Even now I am the chairman of the SLFP Branch. Here I must mention a situation that you are not aware of.

The day the Weka office was opened a proposal was made to collect Rs.10/- from each to stage a ceremony to receive you. Reply for the proposal was 'let no salary is paid to buy garlands and put up stages.' Such an antagonistic behaviour was shown when as the Chief clerk I prohibited bringing liquor to the premises and playing carom in office hours. I finally put the disc into the drawer. In the midst of such opposition I stood by you while working in that first AGA office of our country. Even my nameboard had been thrown to a garbage heap. But finally something totally unforeseen has happened. Maybe you would look back on the past and have a deeper insight into events. Basic reasons for all this could be my lowly social status. I need not remind you of the decisions made by you without consulting me.

I am actually sorry for the information you had given Mr. Ariyaratne and make one request to you.

It is obvious that vicious opportunists cum immoral ones who abhor truth exploit people and mislead you by false information. Hence please let these individuals present you these facts before me with substantial evidence and I earnestly await such an opportunity.

Liquor and prostitution are so distant from me, who am a very innocent person feeding on a vegetarian diet. I only crave altruistic pleasure from my life. Hence I am almost immune to this character assassination and am lucky to be thus fortified.

Once again I focus your attention on thus matter.

Copy :- Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne
Headquarters, Sarvodaya
Meth Medura, Moratuwa.

Yours truly,
Premanath Ratnasuirya,
Chairman of dissolved
Sarvodaya Society

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The Walking Library

The day we were driving by jeep from Deniyaya along Kolavenigama road, I was the driver. Soon we feasted our eyes on a damsel in cloth and jacket carrying on her shoulder a bundle of books. I slowed the vehicle and asked her with a smile.

"Sister, what are you carrying?"

Not looking directly at me, she replied "Books."

"What books?"

"Books in the Singithi library of Sarvodaya."

"So why are you carrying them?"

"I go from door to door and distribute the books to 'nangis' (young sisters) and mallis (younger brothers). Next week I go again and interchange them."

"So nangi is a walking library?"

She smiled and said that some villagers address her so.

"What is your name?"

"Kusumawathi."

"How far do you go?"

"Forty cents worth."

Though she was endowed with the modesty of our rural damsels I sensed that she was a sociable and intelligent girl.

"I will drive you."

"No No, I will walk". Then she looked intently at me and looked surprised. I got down. The girl kept the books on a cliff and knelt and worshipped me.

"I could not recognize you sir," she said her eyes brimming with joyful tears.

Hewawitharana malli in the meantime deposited the books in the vehicle. Now we drove along.

The girl began talking.

"I participated in the Singithi Seva course conducted by Mrs. Jayasekera at Sarvodaya about 3 months back. Now I am working in the village. We do much work. The children love to read. Last week we got very valuable books from the headquarters. Actually Sir, Sarvodaya does immense service."

What a long time has lapsed since then. But the vision of that girl walking along the road with the books and the last utterance about our service is yet ingrained in my mind.

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Co-operation and Sharing of Resources for Development

Never was I a believer in party politics. Yet I was of the belief that I should ally myself with the party in power and with the further help of private entrepreneurs and civil society build up peace, unity and co-operation and sharing of resources in my country. This resource - sharing has to take place between state and voluntary bodies for which the latter should reciprocate by helping the state. Such a co-existence would end up in diverting the self-reliance of the people and the collective energy into the development matrix.

Infused with this idea in the 1970 decade I submitted it to both Mrs. Sirimavo and to Mr. Dudley Senanayake. While doing so, I focussed on the work already done by Sarvodaya and the successful consequences. But the aid I got from both parties was inadequate. What I envisaged was to encase Sarvodaya policies into the pocket of national policies. I surmise that they were not in favour of the suggestion as politically it was not beneficial.

But I was not discouraged. I had the intuition that one day the State would accept our proposals. In the meanwhile the receipt of the Ramon Magsaysay award paved the way for me to establish International links. Especially I got the chance to participate in various UN Conferences via the World Assembly Youth and co-ordinate with NGOs in Europe. I made the acquaintance of Mr. Piet Dijkstra , a Netherlander in the course of all these. Permeated by Gandhian philosophy he was an intellectual of the highest order. Now the doors were open to me for many foreign contacts. I further got a chance to hunt for basic resources as our

State was not a supplier. First I earned money via my lectures etc. and then I began to work for actual foreign aid.

By this time the foreign aid our island got was diverted to European and missionary agencies only, nourishing the progress of only foreigners and Christians and nothing percolated down to Buddhists and Hindus. If they were to profit conversion was the only alternative.

After cultivating Dijkstra friendship doors of many a foreign donor agency was open to me. I travelled to Geneva, Rome, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany and made a complete study of their activities. I suggested to them that aid should be given transgressing all racial and religious boundaries. Alleviation of poverty should be the objective of aid. I told them that Sarvodaya worked on such principles.

Some of the international institutions I visited were the International Lutherean Centre, World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic relief agencies, World University Service, International Councils for NGOs and Oxfam centres in England, America and Canada. But finally only Frederich Naumann Stiftung of Germany and NOVIB of Netherlands opted to help us.

By this time as Sarvodaya had expanded wide and far, aid was required to work not only at national but at international level too. Such a course I felt was quite justifiable though many began to criticize us. We never sacrificed our identity but extremists heaped all sorts of criticisms on us refusing to look at the aid issue neutrally. Even today I feel quite justified in what I did.

Parallely we ventured into a new path i.e. that of Vishvodaya. By Vishvodaya was envisioned a very wide scheme of inter-locking persons and families through out the world. This I achieved via the Twinning Village system, by which a village in Balen, Belgium was bonded to a Sarvodaya village. In the 70 decade the scheme was in full swing.

With all these hopes and aspirations I invited many politicians to the Sarvodaya centre to observe what we were doing.

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Sarvodaya and State Co-ordination

When we build up our Sarvodaya no NGOs existed in the country. But there were movements as the Temperance Movement, Sri Lanka Buddhist Congress, The Young Buddhist Association, 'YMCA', and Mahila Samithi. Being voluntary organizations, salaried staff in these was meagre.

Structure-wise Sarvodaya was very similar to these organizations. Difference was that we owned a new philosophy, adopted new techniques and established new independent societies in villages directing the total society into an ahimsa revolution. It should also be mentioned that right from its inception it was dedicated to bring about multiple changes in the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political arenas.

In the tail end of 1960 decade, begun, the Freedom from Hunger Campaign and National Youth Services Council. Mr. Ariye Levi, an Israeli who came as a consultant for this met me and got much advice from me. The then PM Mr. Dudley Senanayake requested me to head this, which I declined. Mr. Chandra Fonseka became kingpin of the FFHC and at his request I too served on this committee for some time but gave up after Mr. Upali Guneratne took over. (I remember that this Committee plus Sarvodaya were declared Punyayathena [Charitable bodies] by the same Gazette notification). Actually it was I who proposed both above committees and I declined to work on them for two reasons. One was that these two then can strengthen civil society if based on popular participation. When working as state agencies they can be exposed to political infiltration.

Despite this situation in the 1970 decade I worked in close collaboration with the premier's office in order to build up the Sarvodaya as a people's organization untainted by politics. Since the PM, as head of the Mahila Samithi owned an attitude regarding this different from other politicians and bureaucrats was to my advantage.

Another factor of note is that hitherto only Christian voluntary organizations had been linked to International development networks. Ours was the first non-Christian body to set the trend. The village twinning network, getting aid from UNESCO Gift Coupon Scheme, 11-11-11 Belgium programme, Frederich Naumann Stiftung of Germany, NOVIB of Netherlands, Oxfam of England, Helvetas of Switzerland - all these developmental international institutions first linked themselves with our network. At the outset much issues arose due to the inexperience of our administrative officers in this field. As an example, difficulties arose with regard to procuring visas for the foreign visitors, getting official recognition from our government to these bodies as aid organizations, getting permits for the import of machines, vehicles, food stuffs and other equipment sent from overseas, and exempting them from tariffs etc.

When such difficulties arose Mrs. Sirimavo got us the support of very efficient officers. Among them were Mr. M.D.D. Peiris, Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Director of Rural Development, Minister T.B. Ilangaratne, Mr. P.D. Uduwela, Social Services Director, his deputy Mr. P.B. Wewegama. Rid of the pomposity of officialdom, the genuine work they performed we look back on with gratitude.

That was the situation then. What about the present?

Today to strengthen civil society NGOs are mushrooming all over the country. Ironically the very people who blocked our progress and ridiculed it are forming a myriad NGOs for various causes imitating us and after retiring from government service. By the very legal taboos, these people imposed to block our work are today working as deterrents to their own work. That is the irony of destiny.

However, during the lapse of four decades, they are alert to the realistic situation.

Yet another difference is manifest. I began this venture after discarding a permanent profession that entitled me to a pension. We had no hopes of procuring an income through our work. That way we had made a vast sacrifice which they tainted by building up false prejudices among the public. Thus the brunt of criticisms of NGOs fell on the much popular Sarvodaya. In fact if an irresponsible newspaper was to flash a headline that a certain famous social service organization was enmeshed in corruption on an International level, it was us who were always suspected.

While NGOs have proliferated in our island, that it is we who are always ridiculed and suspected despite our integrity could be due to jealousy cum fear of politicians according to friends of mine.

Anyway I bear all this with equanimity.

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Victims of 'Power Frenzy'

From the inception of Sarvodaya I was not enamoured of party politics. This is because even a very genuine man who enters politics once he becomes a minister has the tendency to forget that he is a servant of the people and begins to lord over the public. Majority exhibit this type of behaviour. Perhaps the titles and plaudits received boggles them in a 'Power Frenzy', a feature very undesirable in a fervent social service worker. Even the public is to be blamed for this situation for some of them solicit politicians' help to get illegal or immoral things done thus misleading the politics.

It is indeed an evil trend.

I have already dwelt on Power Frenzy, and I have gone through some bitter experiences due to those saturated with this frenzy. Without mentioning names I will narrate a few of these incidents.

When a new government assumed power in 1977, a MP of the South wrote to me stating that all appointments of Sarvodaya at District, Provincial and rural pioneer level would be done by him and had asked me to inform others about it. I was amazed. The particular MP, before he became MP had invited me to a ceremony in a Dhamma school. Enroute to another function along the way, I saw him even putting up a pandol to receive me. Then at the function he gave me a loud ovation and even made a speech eulogizing Sarvodaya. Hence the letter perplexed me more. I wrote to him to be clear about his role and informing that appointment of NGO officers do not fall within his purview.

Photo 54 -
The Training Centre for disabled at Telembuyaya
behind me is Admiral A.W.H. Perera

Ven. Hedigalle Pangnatissa Thero who headed the Mahabodhi Temple gifted a land of about 200 acres to us to put up a 'Lama Gammana' - Children's Village. This was to house orphans and destitute street children. Here we began building a centre of international standards replets with playgrounds, indoor stadiums and auditoriums. Unluckily soon took place a government change over. The new MP of the ruling party chased away the children and settled some of his stooging families there. We could do nothing. The prelate who had gifted the land had gone to live in India and we had no official documents of ownership. The loss incurred by us ran to lakhs.

The Telambuyaya Training Centre at Hambantota for disabled children that was handed over in 1980 by the government to us, shared the same fate. We had spent 12 million on it and were running it very methodically when within 24 hours the government took it over. Even the paddy harvest of 10 acres was denied to us.

Other places subject to political revenge were our farms at Dehiowita and the farm at Eta Messa Kanda in Galle.

Most of these vicious events were staged between 1970 and 1980. Not that they ceased after that. But our acute persecution period was between 1970 and 1980, not only due to act of politicians but due to bureaucrats who misled them, focussing on their own advancement. Till party politics and bureaucracy last, the vicious circle will rotate. That is why Sarvodaya rejects party politics. Having declared so, I demonstrated that Sarvodaya carries out such a programme and went onto expound our projects and policies in detail.

Photo 55 -
A trainee youth repairing watches at the Telembuyaya centre

At this time we were in dire need of resources to go on both at national and international level. Since no state patronage was given international aid was imperative. But we were not ready to sacrifice our identity, though many were critical of our getting foreign aid. These critics were political fanatics, who never viewed us neutrally. However, I maintain that getting foreign aid while preserving our identity was the best course.

The central figure of another incident was a female MP, a former teacher, she contested an upcountry seat and became an MP. Soon after I got a letter from her stating that the pre-school Sarvodaya teacher in her school is from the opposition party and since the government party was the ruling party that she be replaced by her nominee. She had stressed that the order should be followed.

I wrote to her conveying this idea. ‘Our organization is a NGO recognised by a government statute. Hence under the present constitution I cannot obey you. But were you to change the constitution and become a despot you can order me. But I would also notify you that we would exert ourselves to retrieve the country from your dictatorship.’

Copies of the letter were sent to the President and PM who, I heard later, had phoned her and advised her firmly.

Some time later, I stopped at Hasalaka Rest-house on my way to a ‘Gam Udawa’ festival. There were many MPs and Ministers there. As I was talking with Mr. Jayawickrema Perera and some other MPs, somebody came and told me that ‘Madam’ wished to speak to me. I surmised ‘Madam’ to be Mrs, Bandaranaike, but it was that female MP. Then Mr. Jayawickrema Perera told the messenger “Mr. Ariyaratne is now talking with me. Ask Madam to come here.” Soon, this MP dressed in a beautiful green Osaree joined us and began talking. She even mentioned my letter whereupon we had a hearty laugh. Now she is one of the best friends of Sarvodaya.

There were certain incidents that had a heavy toll on our works too.

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Buddhadasa Rasaputram

Buddhadasa Rasaputram was a great man who joined me in the 1970 decade. Earlier he worked in the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress and before that he had held varied posts in the Postal Department.

Photo 56 -
Mr. Buddhadasa Rasaputram

After reading an article of mine on the 'Buddhist National Force', published in the Daily News, he came to my 'House under the Breadfruit tree' to meet me. We became bosom friends after this, and the fact that we both despised party politics bonded us more.

Though advanced in age, he performed yeoman service to our movement. In fact it was mainly due to his unflagging energy that I bought land for the Damsak Mandira, Suwasetha Home, pre-school ground, premises of Artha Dharma Centre, land for Ratmalana Vishva Lekha Press. Many of our lands in the country owe themselves to the money I collected with the effort and energy of Mr. Rasaputram. In the legal work involved he was helped by our lawyer Mr. D.C. de Silva of Panadura. Though very conscientious in their duty that did not dampen their jovial natures. When we travelled to distant places I was highly entertained by their jovial conversation. In the month of December and January Mr. Rasaputram becomes almost frenzied. The symptom of this is the way he buys bread from

Rawatawatte junction, breaks it into pieces and distributes it among all the stray dogs. Then he informs the canine crowd "My boss has forbidden you to enter through the gates". He enters the office singing "Danno Budunge" in a loud voice and entertains the office crowd with his songs. As I enter my office, he comes in assuming the role of an Upasaka.

Photo 57 -
Affection to dogs

During this joyous session of Mr. Rasaputram I used to balance it by putting on a rough facial expression. Mrs. Rasaputram too used to phone me and say that her husband's spring season has begun. During mid January he becomes sober and songs cease. One day the German Ambassador (a lady) had visited me. Mr. Rasaputram is never a respecter of those holding high post. He thrust a letter on my table and I read its contents written in English for the visitor too to hear. It read: "I am not prepared to work further for a cowardly boss like you." As he left the room I raised my second finger, pointed it at my head and turned it leftwards. That was a signal to the visitor that Rasaputram is in one of his angry moods. When the two of us came out, he was seated, his face pressed on the table. I patted him and then he got up and joined us. I crushed the letter of resignation and put it in the waste paper basket. Now everything returned to normal. That was Rasaputram.

In the 1977 elections he resigned from Sarvodaya to contest the Kamburupitiya seat as an independent candidate. His slogan was "I do not want to enter Parliament but only to create a forum to work against party politics." He was the sole campaigner for himself. After elections he met me and declared that though he lost the seat that he had conveyed the message.

Even after he retired due to health reasons, I visited him often. On the day of his retirement, many appreciatory speeches were made and even a gift given. I myself composed some Sinhala verses and recited them. They read as follows:

Etched high in our annals
Is the noble man who worked for Sarvodaya
Rasaputh, compassionate follower of
Buddhas' doctrine.

Now he has retired,
When challenges sprang.
You always were in the front rank like a giant.
We were your juniors in strength
awakened by your clarion calls.

Replete with human qualities you are,
So light hearted you were,
We wish you,
A long healthy life with the help of the Triple Gem.

Some years back, he bid his last 'adieu' to us.

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A Slaughter House of Cattle in a Jak estate

Once I was travelling from Alawwa towards Dambadeniya. On the way I was accosted by a tragic sight. A crowd was bulldozing young jak trees in a large estate. I got down from the vehicle. A rather elderly villager who probably recognized me remarked,

'Sir, see how these people cut these trees that flourished like regal elephants.'

'Why are they doing it?'

'Government is going to put up a workshop it seems'.

I spoke with the people there and the elderly man too joined us. Those I spoke to, informed us that the government with foreign aid was going to put up a slaughter house for cattle, hence the clearance. I really turned topsy-turvy at this reply and walked out, while the man remarked 'See how they are destroying our 'kos' (jak) and getting us to eat 'mus' (meat).

I laughted at this but in the evening met certain senior government officers. They reiterated the early information. I was further told that the new cattle slaughter house would provide jobs for about 1000 job-less, and would turn into flesh, imported cattle and this flesh would be tinned and exported. The MP of the area was a friend of mine. I phoned him and he said this was a Ministry decision conducive to solve the unemployment problem and State does not put in any investment.

I argued that this plan would lead to environmental pollution initially. Then the death pangs of the cattle would throw a curse on the people of the area. Finally the whole area would become infertile and disease will spread. So I said that I am going to build up public opinion against the envisioned plan and asked him not to be hurt.

Immediately after my return from Dambadeniya I met Ven. Kalukondayawe Pagnasekera Maha Thero and gave him the news, emphasising the need to build up a public opinion. Convinced he first courted the help of other Sangha. Many prominent citizens too were apprised. Finally a very volatile campaign headed by Ven. Kalukondayawe Pagnasekera Maha Thero, Ven Madihe Pangnaseeha Maha Thero and many lay people and clergy was staged and several dignitaries of other denominations supported us. We had the ability of transforming the campaign from a political one to one of national importance.

We won the battle and the slaughter house never came up. That elder who spoke to me too would have been jubilant that he could eat 'kos' instead of 'mus'.

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The harmless Major-General

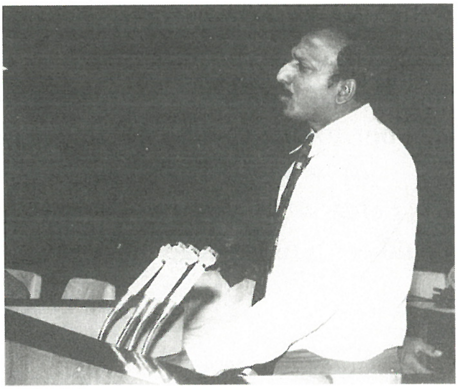

Photo 58 -
Major-General Ananda Weerasekera

That I always set my eyes on the teaching service as my profession was motivated by my desire to serve the nation. It is this profession that finally carves out a nation's future.

In 1958 I fulfilled my dream of getting an appointment as a Science teacher at Nalanda Vidyalaya in Colombo. But yet there is something amiss in my life. Could not I serve the whole nation, and not only children? True even then I indulged in social service work as a leader of the Social Service Society in the college. The Kanatoluwa programme that stands out in my life was initiated by this society.

In 1972 I made the bold decision to quit teaching and devote my whole life for social service. Yet deep in my heart I yet loved teaching. The joy I get by the mere sight of universities, teachers and students is boundless. But even now I am engaged in the teaching profession ie. as a Community Educator.

Personally I feel that a true teacher never retires. He is perpertually learning and also perpertually disseminating knowledge, as he has the welfare of the world as his target. The biggest bonanza one receives from the profession is the flowering of the energy of one’s students who in turn become servants of the nation’s welfare. That is altruistic joy which I too share .

One such student of mine who rose to the very top and executed my own Sarvodaya philosophy was a retired Major-General.

His name is Ananda Weerasekera and his siblings too are of a special mould, character-wise education wise and loved the country. To their parents who bore such offsprings, we bestow respect.

Ananda while as a student too displayed prowess in not only education and sports but in social service too. He also took up cudgels against unjust causes. It was he who once led a Satyagraha movement against an unjust directive by the Education Ministry.

Why I introduced this person to you was because of a special role he played during the 1971 insurgency. Instead of killing these misled young rebels, he made use of the principles of ahimsa and maitree and diverted them to the correct path. He did so at the risk of his life.

When we got a chance of reforming these youths of the 71' Insurgency, it was from them that I learnt about the role played by Ananda Weerasekera. Thereupon I went to meet him, and asked him to make an open declaration of his experiences.

He acceded and made a remarkable presentation narrating all the terrible traumas he had gone through. His speech too was very instructional and provided a vast stimulus to the audience. Hence after having got this speech in writing I thought of using it as my next chapter.

I thank him for his permission to publish it.

Photo 59 -
Ananda Weerasekera on the battlefield

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The day 'Himsa' (violence) was won by 'Ahimsa' (non-violence)

The eve of the year 1971 was a time phase of much misfortune in our island when an ocean of sighs heaved from the bosoms of distraught parents. A river of blood flowed through and a morbid miasma spread everywhere. A segment of misled youth had got stranded embarrassing and stranding the leaders too. The very leaders of the JVP movement, the armed insurgency movement, had begun shielding themselves under forest cover.

At this time I was an army captain. After serving in many areas I was finally posted to Vavuniya. By this time the terrain around Anuradhapura, Medawachchiya and Vavuniya had turned into a habitat of threatened populace Many youths had been arrested while thousands of young men had just disappeared. The police and army turned into frenzied non-humans were pursuing Sinhala youth while the JVP leaders had taken to the forests. All this information was received by me.

Even prior to my assumption of my duties news of disgraceful occurrences had reached me. Already I had witnessed crimes committed under the guise of 'Terrorist suppression', crimes against which disgust churned within me. Many crimes were lustful, yet others propelled by jealousy, arrogance, political revenge and personnel issues. People had developed a morbid fear of the police and army camps. Law and injustice seem to have become defunct.

That such things could be orchestrated in a Sinhala Buddhist society made me too helpless in many instances.

I seem to have been thrown into a society where all what I had learnt in the Dhamma school could never be practised. At this juncture I was informed that 6 armed ring leaders of the insurgency were hiding in a nearby forest. I was enmeshed in the problem of their capture.

One morning I worshipped Buddha and went to the prisoners' cell. Jayantha, a youth came under our control, smiled and asked me ‘Sir, when are we sent to Colombo?’.

I told him, ‘No Jayantha. I am not sending you to Colombo, but to the forest. I will give you a note. Give it to Wimala, your leader and get a reply from him. Can you do it?’.

Without any hesitation he volunteered to do it.

“Will you run away without coming back?”

‘’Never Sir, believe me. You saved my life and I will return.”

The note I sent through Jayaratne reads as follows.

“May Buddha protect you,”

Dear Wimala,

This is Captain Ananda Weerasekera, head of Vavuniya army camp writing to you. The revolution initiated by you and your friends and still being monitored from the wilds has misfired. People now label you as a gang of murderers only. Hence fix a date, time and place to meet me and send the information through Jayantha. I will come unarmed to meet you. Let us discuss and if your talks fail I will be forced to resort to armed tactics again, if you fail to prove yourself surrender and I will protect you."

Three days passed. Nothing happened. Already an anonymous letter had gone to army headquarters that I had released a prisoner. Did Jayantha run away? Or did he join the terrorists again?

On the fifth day he returned with a reply and smiling. This was the reply.

“To Captain Weerasekera,

We have some trust in you. Come at 6.00 a.m. coming Sunday to the foothills of the hillock behind Madukanda temple. We hope you would not betray us.

Wimala

I felt happy, but scared too. Unable to come to a decision I summoned my assistant and told him all. Then I said, "Sergeant Kolonne, I will go alone on the assignment".

"OK, Sir, no evil will fall on you."

On the scheduled day I went to Madukanda temple by jeep, then climbed the hillock, lit a cigarette and waited till 5.30. The cold winds dispelled my anguish. The birds twittered and sun's rays radiated across the bracken. A 100 yards away the dawn sunlight was very clear. In an instant 5 armed men emerged in dark blue shirts. In a loud voice I asked "Are you Wimala?"

But just then a surprising thing happened. About 12 of my soldiers at the base were directing guns at them and shouting "Don't move. Otherwise we will shoot". Now they had circled the terrorists. Now Sergeant Kolonne ordered them to lay down their guns. I was overcome with shame and sorrow.

"You are a very mean officer", bellowed one of the bearded insurgents. "After promising to talk with us unarmed you got us rounded up".

I screamed at Sergeant Kolonne, "Men! what the ...... did you do?"

"We have to protect you" he said. Yelling angrily, I ordered. "Go back to the camp. These are not our enemies, but good Sinhala lads. We cannot solve our problems by killing them. Get back".

I saw them retreating. Only a short distance was between the insurgents and me and I told them, 'Forgive me. I had not planned to round you up. That was my sergeant's ploy to protect me. If you want you can shoot me now. I am unarmed.' Now they came forward and stopped. I could see that they were fatigued. We talked about 1 1/2 hours after which they lay aside their guns and surrendered .

It needs confidence to talk with an armed gang. Further it needs a persuasive power. Two teachers inculcated these qualities in me, one my father, the other the Sarvodaya leader Mr. Ariyaratne. My father worked for 42 years in the Prison's Department. He was a strong man, high in morals and a non-alcoholic. When I was 15 or 16, he took me to visit prisons and let me talk with murderers, criminals and robbers. I learnt a lot from their horrendous narratives and the habit instilled in me the boldness and have dialogues with them.

Poverty is the main cause of crime and human tension. It was my second teacher who exposed me to conditions of extreme poverty. Though small in size but big in stature he encouraged us to identify this impoverishment as a teacher at Nalanda. The Sarvodaya was known as shramadana sanvidanaya. He got us to travel to distant villages and live with poor people. All these activities were based on Buddha's teachings.

This teacher exerted himself to recognize the toils and traumas of people and identify causes. We were acclimatized to the thinking of these helpless humans. Soon we became more sober, our words more soft. We learnt not to be quarrelsome but tranquil in our dealings with people. So the honour goes to our teacher here. This small teacher is the one who actually got me to talk with those armed terrorists. Everyday I mulled on a strategy of controlling them without murdering them. Finally I triumphed in my plan. Mr. Neville Jayaweera later became Government Agent of Vavuniya. He has written a book in English recounting all his experiences. And my adventure here is included in the book.

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An attempt to save the 1971 Rebels

I was happy that when the 1971 rebellion was staged that no one connected to Sarvodaya had taken part in it. This was because our followers sincerely clung to the Ahimsa principle. But yet that such a large segment of our youth like moths who are drawn to flames and are burnt had got attracted to the rebellion and got extinguished caused much anguish within me. Especially as a teacher who performed much service for the future generation the holocaust caused in me indescribable sorrow.

I was aware that all this youth (male and female) who joined this movement were intent on eliminating a corrupt regime and substituting it with a better and just rule. But the destructive strategy they adopted did not suit the objective. Can freedom be achieved through murder? Didn't it lead to their own suicide?

We are also of the belief of the need for a change of regime and we too work towards that aim. Even we have launched a revolutionary path. Yet it revolves around the *ahimsa* (non-violent) concept. It is more a revolution in thought. We act as conduits of conveying the injustices of the present administrative system to the people and thereby changing it via popular participation. Yet it is not a revolution that can be staged within 24 hours, but is a long range process involving re-shaping the basic social process. Never would we involve the process with murder, but through peace, and preserving life by amalgamating parties and opposing forces. Yet we came into the forefront of a moment of reforming the misled lives of youths after preserving their lives. We made the state aware of our plan.

Photo 60 -
Mr. Rohana Wijeweera with my brother Weere, daughter Charika and Mr. Rasaputram after he was released from prison

In the meantime the state had established a Judicial mechanism called the Criminal Justice Commission and brought about 3000 youth before it. Another group had been brought before ordinary courts and 13 of them were to be subject to capital punishment and hung.

This was a grave situation especially since the latter were between 18 and 25 years. I met Mrs. Sirimavo and argued the gravity of this issue and proposed that they should be rehabilitated instead of hanging. She asked me to give my request in writing.

Within two days I got the proposal ready with the help of Mr. Chandra H. Zoysa. I further discussed the matter with Mrs. Suriya Wickremasinghe, founder of Civil Rights Movement and with Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe.

This is the letter I forwarded to the PM.

I. Terrorists and Capital Punishment

My devotion to you and sympathy for those youths scheduled for capital punishment drive me to pen this.

1. We have been informed that about 3000 youth suspected of terrorist activity have been brought before the Criminal Justice Commission. Some declared guilty have been imprisoned and a large number released on bail. Yet others are awaiting trial and others being tried. But it is said that the Criminal Justice Commission has no authority to mete capital punishment.

2. But the normal courts have the power of this jurisdiction, and already 13 have been given the verdict according to newspapers. The 13 have appealed to the Supreme Court and if the appeals are turned down their lives are over. Only the Hon. Prime Minister's mediation could get the President to change the death sentence to imprisonment for life.
3. If the Criminal Justice Commission attended to these cases it is said that the death sentence would not be enforced. Hence this issue has be to given a more indepth study.
4. Public are aware of the nature of handling of the insurrection by the Special Court, which acted on the policy of absorbing back into society astray youths after rehabilitation. This policy changed the adverse propaganda carried about the government via media and made the PM subject of sympathy and praise. The Criminal Justice Commission's activities and the rehabilitation measures added impetus to it. But all this will be tainted by this capital punishment and will make one wonder why government deviated from its laudable policy here.
5. This measure would permanently estrange the already estranged youth and further expose the State to much criticism. The personal integrity of the Prime Minister and State's just nature too could be questioned. If as an alternative, a life imprisonment is enforced focussing on Maitree, Karuna, Muditha and Upekkha, the service of our Premier would be immortalised.
6. Following are some cogent requests why the Hon. PM should intervene in this matter.
    1. The opinions held by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike on the death sentence: It was he who abolished it. Capital punishment cannot be justified by Buddhism on cultural, political and human grounds. We do not expect you to set them free but to give alternative punishment. Steps like pardon, rehabilitations and suspended punishments would earn the blessings of the world community.

II. Request of the Prime Minister to surrender

According to above request in mid-April 1971 many surrendered. PM also promised to act justly. Though certain explicit promises were not given, it was clear that she was acting justly. It is also necessary to find out whether these enforced capital punishment belong to the army.

III. Cases were inquired under dual laws. Terrorists were brought before two kinds of courts exercising different laws. The Criminal Justice Commission differed from the Higher Court. The former court does not mete death sentences. Their maximum punishment is life imprisonment.

IV. The respondents had no right to choose their mode of court. It was the Attorney-General office that decided the choice. This finally makes a few being subject to capital punishment, to be incidental.

V. Misled youths

The JVP comprised two segments of a handful of leaders and a multitude of followers. Thus the matrix was crafted that a few could mislead many. Now the rehabilitation of these misled followers has begun.

According to a speech made by the Minister of Justice on the opening of the Rehabilitation Centre of Prisons Dept. in May 1975, the process has already begun. Hence out of 16,000 released, 125 have been again imprisoned. JVP leaders are already behind bars. But reiterated here is again the injustice of the death sentence.

VI. The offenders have already been rehabilitated by the denizens of their villagers having pardoned them. Now the offenders are leading useful lives. This reflects the public opinion at rural level.

VII. The terrorist movement is a complex syndrome staged in contemporary history. Though political expediency and aggression should be condemned, yet there are some who admire the courage, self-sacrifice and objectives and mechanisms of these youth who majorly are Sinhala Buddhists. Public opinion is again tested in 1977 elections and it is to the gain of the State to court it.

VIII. Foreign public opinion

It is public news that foreign newspapers flashed news about government overriding its powers. Of course news was perverted by them. Yet the rehabilitation measures of the government, the programme at Pallekelle camp and release of certain prisoners countered this false propaganda. The prestige gained by the government internationally for 4 years will be marred by this death sentence.

IX. Terrorism takes on the face of a civil war.

Murders committed under this do not fall within the category. Hence these murders too do not come into the normal murder category. In a holocaust of the nature, both parties are frenzied. Even the Police and Army act on inflamed sentiments. In the Prema Manamperi case, Wijesuriya was freed of the death sentence. Legally they may go free but the public prejudice remains. In this case, always the thought lurks in the public mind that a killer who ended a damsel's life went scot-free.

X. Age of Capital Punishment.

Most of the offending youth belong to 18-25 age group and this too entitles them to sympathy.

XI. The death sentence would zoom them to heroes.

Other countries supply examples of this phenomena. The alternative of imprisonment makes them forgotten heroes. Their deaths could resurrect the JVP. The conclusion of the Committees into terrorism in Ireland headed by Lord Gardiner too testifies to this. It reads "That those who received death sentence become heroes is the experience gathered all over Ireland. Further this sentence decimates the value of human life thus fostering violence. So our belief is that capital punishment only enhances violence."

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Sarvodaya Enters Vishvodaya

During 1969, and 1970 the fame of Sarvodaya Movement spread far and wide. Many youth feeling it to be an apt platform to help unemployed youth and utilise their talents for the future progress of the country, congregated around it. Especially our Job Training Units proved very popular.

Further our organization was unprecedented in its provision of services. It catered to a sequestered (an isolated) segment of the country. Further it focussed on traditional ethics emulated by our villagers. Our philosophy too was fed on it. That its leaders majorly came from the teaching profession strengthened it further.

As Sarvodaya's strength has got reinforced by the public, our problems too grew in intensity. Especially the educational issues of our youth, their residential problems and subsistence problems and building amenities created problems. True, many leaders and philanthropists helped us but still we had our problems.

Fortunately as fame of our Sarvodaya spread worldwide, I was invited to many foreign seminars. Then foreigners in turn wanted to get a first hand knowledge of how the village resources were used for development. In fact this format had gained publicity as 'a giant movement done by a small man'. They had grasped the proposed message underlying the movement.

I was invited to countries as Belgium, Netherlands and Germany to explain our programme. I accepted their invitations aware of help that could be got from them. However, I had to undergo much discomfort. I could not stand the intense cold. Food-wise too I was uncomfortable as European food was distasteful to me.

I went for my lectures shivering with cold. Sometimes I spent sleepless nights wandering from city to city. But the large crowds that attended my lectures and the ovations received were some consolation. Not only did I publicise the Sarvodaya philosophy, but hunted for markets as outlets for our manufactured goods as Batiks and handicrafts.

The money I got for lectures, I invested in the movement. 'The Twinning Village Programme' was a programme born out of my visits. This meant an adoption of a poor village of ours by a prosperous village of their countries and its upliftment. Balen of Belgium and Halmillewewa were the first villages twinned.

The premier organizations that helped me were - The World Assembly of Youth, UNESCO and 11 11 11 Campaign of Belgium. UNESCO needs special mention for donating 100 libraries to 100 villages. Other than this Belgium (with it Twin-village system), Netherlands, Germany, America, France and Japan undertook the development of 61 villages of ours. Quota is as follows:-

Belgium - 21, America - 25, Netherlands - 9, Germany - 5, Switzerland - 4 and Japan and France one each.

I will append a description of these villages at the end of this chapter. To make a success of the Vishvodaya programme I travelled throughout the world giving lectures, preparing documents, collecting money and keeping up-to-date records of my expenses. Actually I worked like a machine after returning as I had to distribute the aid I got equally and justly to villages and launch on service worthy projects. Soon pre-schools, libraries, shrines, farms, wells, communal centres and houses came up in these villages. The prolific gamut of services, involved in all these, only the gods above could witness.

We began to term this international service network 'Vishvodaya'. The foreigners who assisted made it a point to visit our villages. Now grew up the need to host them, to accompany them and expose our programmes to them.

Our voluntary organizations at Central level, district level and village level were expected to put in their share of work here. I was careful not to invest a cent of the money I accumulated for private matters. The almost ashram life of our family at Meth Medura went on however getting my second attention. While my staff were given the full free reins to go in with their work I do not know how many fulfilled my confidence.

I wonder whether any organisation in the world got aid as ours. The catalyst was my effective presentation of the Sarvodaya philosophy to endear it to them and convince them of its new profile. Though Sarvodaya was begot here it was actually these foreigners who grasped its depth of purpose.

I am overjoyed that I could render such a momentous service to my country through this movement. When I close my eyes permanently the happiness would suffice me. But when I look back on my path certain things pain me, as the memory of some humans who with our help rose up and then kicked the ladder that helped them climb.

But I have no hatred towards them and only take such behaviour as a challenge. But since I am a normal human being the pain caused stays within me. But I wish them all the best.

Now I would list the countries, villages and persons who helped us. Foremost among the aid giving countries was Belgium. I twinned the following villages of Belgium ie. Balen, Meerhout, Dilsen, Opwÿk, Zelzaat, Lepper, and Wewelgam with the villages of Halmilleweva, Kumbukgollawa, Ukuwela, Madiwela, Kakirigoda, Palpotha,Weboda, Alawwa, Kudaoya, Perakumpura, Shanthipura, Kumbukkele, Navagatte Colony, Uduwela and Kandawatte in Anuradhapura, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Kurunegala, Galle, Nuwara Eliya and Puttalam districts.

Much development work followed.

Here I must mention the following Belgians who helped - Mr. P. Plazier, Jack Jansen, Renē Geerts, G.W. Jansen, Jef Sleeks, Jan Pierre, R. Leeuwerissen, P. Van de Brock, Raymond Van der Loog and Fr. Simon Lambreggs. Of both genders they belong to the academia. I remember them with affection.

With the villages Dilsen, Leeuwarden, Enschede, Amersfoort, in Netherlands, the villages of Bakkegama, Kalamulla, Rathmale, Yayamulla, Kurundugolla, Bokalegama, Thunnana, Parangiyamadu and Rathmale were twinned. In the vanguard of this movement were Susiri de Silva, Tineke de Silva, Frans van't Hul, Ruud Soeverÿn, Addie Wartena, Yvonne de Bruin, Tony and Ruud van der Loog.

Twenty five of our villages were developed with the aid of the following Americans working in Global Partners and World Runners of America ie. Dan Dunlop, Mert Mason, Abby Mason, and Jacalyn Bennett. Saddhatissapura, Panama, Kalmunai, Oluville, Uhana, Nugalanda, and Maduwa were some of the twenty five developed villages. France and Japan developed one village each, while Switzerland catalyzed the development of four villages and Germany developed two villages. Mrs. Andrea Bader organized the Swiss programme while Mr. Wennemar Scherrer and Mr. Heide Broll ran the German programme.

Photo 61 -
A Netherlands village to village link-up group at Damsak Mandira

1st REFRESHER SEMINAR
for U.N.V/D.D.S
UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS
AT
LANKA JATIKA SARVODAYA S
DANA SANGAMAYA, MORATUWA, SRI LANKA.
From 27th Sep
To 30th Sept. 84

Photo 62.
A Training Session for UN volunteers

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Sarvodaya in Galle

Baddegama was the womb of the Sarvodaya Movement of Galle. Among those who spearheaded it are Ven. Panditha Ganegama Saranankara Thero, Deshabandu Albert Edirisinghe and Mr. Amarasiri Ponnamperuma of Girimellagaha. I yet remember how I cut the first sod of the road across Edamagodagama. Other than the above mentioned personnel Prof. Dharmasena Arampatta and Mr. T.G. Dayaratne were among the youthful crowd from Colombo. Some people predicted that this was a work that could not be achieved by Sarvodaya but we disproved it.

Gradually we introduced Sarvodaya Shramadana to many villages in Galle district. During the 1971 insurgency and its aftermath Sarvodaya like many other institutions were threatened. The nickname ‘Che Gueverists’ and ‘CIA agents’ was used on us by some jealous politicians. But Mr. Amarasiri Ponnamperuma of Girimellagaha and the villagers went on with their work undaunted.

Photo 63 - Baddegama Centre where Sarvodaya Suwasetha conducts a Childrens’ Home now

In this village the said gentlemen began a Shramadana called Perakum Shramadana and spent his own money, donated land and even put up buildings. Since he worked in the Public Works Dept. of the State, to build a bridge in this village he got State support. Among the 100 villages we chose to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday was this village and Mr. Ponnamperuma brought more light onto it. It was he who played the pivotel role in getting the endorsement of Mr. Dudley Senanayake in 1978 to build the Wakwella-Dodangoda road across Gin Ganga. Every Govt. holiday and every week-end he spent with us on Shramadana work and partook in all our ceremonies and executive meetings. Once when our work flagged for want of funds he gifted to us a land and Rs. 3000/-. He exerted himself to spread the Sarvodaya philosophy among all his staff in the bridge building unit of the works dept.

Photo 64 -
Mr. Amara Ponnamperuma

The Galle district Sarvodaya district centre was housed in the ancestral house of Danny and Albert Withanachchi. First we leased this and later purchased it. On April 18, 1974 we went to the house, and repaired it through a Shramadana and on the 23rd held a Pirith and Dhamma session, gave alms the next day and began formal work.

Ven Pandit Ganegama Saranankara Thero and T.G. Dayaratne malli and Mr. Amarasiri Ponnamperuma played the leading roles. Since we were being victimised by the government Mr. Bradman Weerakoon who was Galle GA gave specific instructions to all Gramasevakas to assist our work. Mr. P.A. Kiriwandeniya, our assistant organizer was in full charge of this venture. A young politician connected to the Bandaranaike family at this time went on harassing us while Father Bharathi of Baddegama gave his unstinted support.

In 1975 we completed many buildings at Baddegama with the aid of Oxfam in England, which buildings turned out to be the training grounds for a many Sarvodaya youth. Production units and a number of pre-schools were housed in these.

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Pada Yatra Sisters of India

I met Vinoba Bhave in October 1973 again who asked me whether I would like sisters of his Ashram to come over and help. I assented. It was a time when the Indian Sarvodaya movement and our movement were building up strong links. As a symbol of our friendship, four sisters volunteered to come over from Pavnar Ashram of Vinoba Bhave and began a Pada Yatra from North to South. When the decision was notified to me, I agreed but with some misgivings as that powerful minister was still estranged. However on the scheduled day four sisters, Hema Bharathi, Lakshmi Praseyan, Nirmala Moid and Devi Risivani came by boat from Dhanushkodi to Talaimannar and began their Pada Yatra.

Along with Harsha Kumara Navaratne and a few others I went to Talaimannar to meet them. Then I handed over the responsibility of organizing the Pada Yatra to Thirunavakarsu malli and Harsha malli and came back to Moratuwa. To the earlier I handled the organising of the northern part of the Pada Yatra and to the latter the Southern part. They performed their duties well while Neetha and I occasionally joined them in the Pada Yatra. Sometimes youths from the particular areas too joined us making the pada yatra a miniature procession. Actually the pada yatra served to build a bridge between the Sinhalese and Tamils.

A ceremony had been organized under Bishop Lakshman Wickramasinghe to receive them on their advent to Kurunegala. Mr. M.W. Karunananda, Prof. L.G. Hewage and several elders joined me at this occasion. One of these sisters in her speech probably having noticed our excessive use of sugar advised us against it. In my speech while endorsing what she said I went on to deal

Indian Pada Yatra Sisters

Photo 65 -
The Peace Walk sisters from India began their Yatra from Talaimannar.

Photo 66 -
With Peace Walk sisters, Neetha and me and several others joined them occasionally

Photo 67 - With Indian Pada Yatra Sisters with the food problem in our country, as our country was then undergoing a food shortage. I said that about 45% of our children were undergoing malnutrition and to counter this we have begun distributing leafy conghee (kola kenda), disseminating information on value of breast milk, distributing milk food brought from Netherlands and establishing community kitchens in villages via which nutritious food was distributed among people.

Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike misconstruing what I said had lashed in Parliament not only at me but at Bishop Lakshman Wickramsinghe and the group from India. The media too gave much coverage to this speech as a consequence of which the nuns faced problems on their Pada Yatra. At Mawathagama in fact we had to retrieve them from an attack yet they went right upto the Devinuwara and then returned to Colombo, on which arrival they were received by Mrs. Sirimavo the PM at 9.30 a.m on November 9, 1974. From Mannar to Moratuwa those four had covered a distance of 658 miles on foot.

When questioned about their experiences by the PM they said that they were very happy at our hospitality. After listening to details expounded by Neetha Ariyaratne, the PM expressed regret at any discomfort caused. She further said that Indira Gandhi, Premier of India had sent a letter mentioning this Pada Yatra. The four sisters in turn expressed their gratitude to the PM. Now they walked again back to Moratuwa where they were received ceremoniously after which they flew to Madras.

Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike had criticised me in Parliament on my ‘conghee’ talk. He had said I have turned the clock back and was indignant on my declaration that 45% of our children were malnourished. But despite his talk, before 3 months lapsed, the Planning Ministry had taken on the ‘conghee’ project as a project of theirs, setting up a separate unit too.

In the meantime a humorous incident connected to this too took place in a village in the South in proximity to the village I was born in. The Sarvodaya community kitchen in this village has supplied a meal a day to 40 children, pregnant mothers, sick and the elderly. We had no permanent buildings and tents were used which however were very clean. A Deputy Minister on his rounds had crept into one of these and inquired what was happening and had been told of the Sarvodaya programme.

Immediately he had flared up and bawled,

"These are CIA milk powder which turns our people into traitors," frightening the kids gathered there and left.

Fortunately or unfortunately at the next elections he lost his seat and plummeted to a mere normal man. Meanwhile once when I went to the airport to fly abroad, he was seated in a corner like a bird clipped of its wings. From his talk I grasped that he had sunk into a helpless state. I spoke to the immigration officers and asked them to help him.

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Experience in the Kitchen

If all the high and low officers aligned to Sarvodaya were to be assembled and told, 'If there is anyone here who cannot prepare his or her own meal, please put hands up', I think only I would do so.

This I state not happily or with pride but with shame. It is also connected to my destiny.

Why?

In my childhood my mother nor any aunts nor my sisters ever allowed me to enter the kitchen, even to boil water. Others did everything for me and kitchen was 'taboo grounds' for me.

I thought marriage would improve matters, but things became worse. Again my wife, Pushpa nangi and the rest of the female regiment ensured the 'forbidden nature' of the kitchen. Finally I am not aware of the colour of my kitchen even. Many who are in and out of my house query me on this and through shame I give a humorous reply.

The reply is this.

From my small days I have stood for women's rights since I am progressive in ideas. At present as I am the king of my domain of Sarvodaya my wife too needs a kingdom. So as a loving just husband I have voluntarily ceded it to her. So my wife domineers over her kingdom.

The visitors howl with laughter at my reply.

But destiny is very strange!

I could not narrate this, any longer, because of a strange experience that propelled me to form a realistic thought-process on the issue. The experience further provided me a chance to realise, the very complex and dynamic nature of the kitchen. But I learnt it via a very painful and embarrassing incident and further not in my own country, but abroad.

I narrate the incident here.

Photo 68 -
With the Mayor of Balen in Belgium

As Sarvodaya Movement gained fame I travelled to different countries giving lectures, mainly to European and Scandinavian countries. Many acquaintances I made in these countries. Here Jack Jansen and the Mai Jansen a pair of Belgians need special mention, together with Renē Geerts brother of Mrs. Mai Jansen.

It was in their house that I lodged when I went to Belgium. It was a two storied spacious complex with all amenities. From here I went for my lectures that were organized by the Jansen couple. I once stayed a week in their apartment.

While there, once I got overcome with a desire to cook a typical Sinhala meal for them in the Jansen kitchen. Two reasons activated me. One was that I was disenchanted with European food, the other a brutal desire to destroy the female rule in the kitchen.

The Jansens fell in with my idea and on a Sunday I went to town and bought rice, coconut and dhal, chillies and oil and began cooking. The Jansens as usual were out taking their exercises. Though I had never cooked I had seen others cooking especially in our camps. I just happened to see the process and never had I deliberately learnt it. Now I began to bring back these scenes to my memory and act

Photo 69 -
A meeting in the village of Meerout

accordingly. Now I broke open the packet of rice, boiled water in a pan and put the rice in it. The amount of water I decided on my own discretion. Now before going any further I decided to fry some chillies, so I took another pan with a long handle and put oil into it. All this time I was drafting in my mind how I would go home and boast about my achievement to Neetha and the crowd.

Now the oil was sizzling and singing 'Danno Budun Ge' in a low tone, I put the chillies in the oil. A fierce smoke issued and even went down my throat making my breathing difficult. My heart began to emit a pain and my eyes were blinded with tears. A non-stop cough began. I just could not believe what was going on and it was as if I was blowing into a furnace.

I seem to have infuriated the gods.

Now a flame began to issue from the pan. The light alarmed me and I switched off the cooker but though the fire subsided the smoke swirled. Now the other sauce pan was making its own noise. I saw the water overflowing and streaming into the fire below. Now I was visualizing a vast swirl of smoke again and my whole body got trapped in anguish. I wanted to scream but no sound was forthcoming.

So I switched off that cooker too. Then I heard a loud voice. Some people were running along the verandah shouting 'fire, fire!' Since due to the cold all doors and windows are closed in these houses, I could not see what was going on outside. Further I was in much pain with tears streaming down and my nose leaking. However having rubbed my face with my jersey I walked to the verandah to see a whole group of women huddled at the corner with their children. What had scared them were the swirls of smoke arising from the windows of the kitchen I worked in.

As they saw me they stopped screaming. Then they stared at me with curiosity as if seeing a ghost. I explained matters to them and said there was no fire and quietened them.

Just then the Jansen couple came running there, perspiration oozing from their bodies. Someone had phoned them. They looked at me with wonder and seeing me okay heaved a sigh of relief.

When I was explaining matters to them in brief every body looked at me sympathetically. They advised and promised to help me. That no body laughed at me or ridiculed me, surprised me. We came back to the kitchen and put things in order. The neighbours went back.

The drama was over. Ever since that I am very sensitive to the gravity of kitchen work. And with this arose in me a great respect for our mothers, wives and sisters labouring in the kitchen.

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Oxfam Connection

The relief organization named Oxfam began in the city of Oxford in England commemorating the very name Oxford and was a body formed to fight hunger. Its original name was Oxford against Famine but later got abbreviated to Oxfam. Later establishments sprouted as Oxfam UK, Oxfam America, Oxfam Canada, and Oxfam Belgium, all performing varied social services.

Our link with Oxfam UK began in 1970. Its first member we encountered was a tall thin gentleman who was a specialist in poverty in developing countries and the technologies required to counter the problems. He had authored a book on the subject too.

The families evacuated in 1977 due to ethnic troubles were settled in the villages of Mahihettiyal, Kanthukulam, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Samapura and also in estate areas and in cities as Colombo and Galle.

I solicited Oxfam aid to re-settle them. After this Oxfam UK helped us to establish the Sarvodaya Centre at Baddegama to put up training centres in Baddegama, establish day care centres to re-settle those made helpless by cyclones and floods, establish the Batticaloa centre and re-develop villages. The following persons earn special mention here – Mr. Bernard Llevellyn, Cole Dodge, Jeff Alderson and Miss. Sheena Grosett.

The aid received from Oxfam UK helped us to put up district and provincial centres in the districts of Galle, Colombo, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Batticaloa and Jaffna plus put up pre-schools, day care centres and community kitchens. Training of health staff too was facilitated. Lakhs of refugees made use of the social service programmes of ours, while Oxfam UK representatives accompanied by me went round inspecting them. They carefully audited our expenses and later satisfied with our honesty, sent letters of appreciation that I keep preserved.

Photo 70 -
Mr. Bernard Llevellyn

I have visited Oxfam UK several times. We got connected to Oxfam USA due to a personal friendship of mine with Dr. Joseph Short its first Executive Director. From June 22nd to 26 of 1977, he toured the island with me visiting our centres. Very satisfied he aided us to put up the Anuradhapura Centre. The American dollars given helped in extending Sarvodaya work in 100 villages in Anuradhapura district.

Actually those who had helped us, when they saw the work we had done were motivated to help us more. In Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Vavuniya districts alone we had begun development work in 169 villages via provincial and district centres. Later the Oxfam USA aid given amounted to 15 lakhs. Mrs. Mary MacCord, came from Oxfam USA to work with us on a voluntary basis.

Dr. Michael F. Scott, Director of Oxfam USA was an intimate friend of mine. So was Dr. Larry Simon, who helped us as an officer there. On an invitation from Oxfam USA I went to America with Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala and cemented our bonds. The visits of Mr. Michael Scott and Mr. Larry Simon paved the way for financial aid to put the centres at Trincomalee and Hingurakgoda. Mr. Scott also helped us in the anti-malaria research campaign we had initiated under Dr. Sarath Ruberu's direction. The Ford Foundation in New Delhi helped us with 60,000 dollars. Mr. Joel Charney of Oxfam USA, Dr. Hans Brown and Rev. Scott Paradise were others of Oxfam USA who visited us.

One foolishness done by me was to introduce certain people with a pretense of dedication to Sarvodaya who later tried to rupture our own connection with Oxfam and courted their help to start their own institutes. Though these persons have now disappeared I maintained my friendship with my foreign helpers.

Canada Oxfam was the third institution to help us. The Kandy district centre of Sarvodaya was established on May 30, 1975 at Mr. T.B. Werapitiya's ancestral house. A retired DIG of Police gifted this house to us, along with 2 1/2 acres of land. Canada Oxfam came forward to help us to develop this place. Mr. Wilf Allen and Mr. Pat Mooney came from Canada Oxfam and prepared the basic report. In the years 1975, 1976, and 1977 the tentacles of our movement spread from here. Later we were compelled to return this house and then we put up temporarily in the house of Prof. A.D.P. Jayatillake.

Later we were capable of putting up our own headquarters in Kandy town itself and establishing a vocational training centre at Palletalawinne.

The Canada Oxfam aid helped in extending our help to cover 300 villages and initiate not only agricultural activities but brass and metal work, handicrafts, and then go in to establish pre-schools, infrastructure and provincial centres. We also extended the Sarvodaya Movement to Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Matale districts with their help.

But soon Canada Oxfam withheld their assistance, a result of sabotage again. However by December 31, 1978 I sent them a full report of our income and expenditure.

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How the Bundala crisis subsided

When Ven. Tiranagama Ratanasara Thero was at Bundala we were able to establish a Sarvodaya Centre there. At this time the area was rather denuded of population and our activities here were on a small scale. Yet as our work intensified more and more people got attracted to us.

We began with Shramadana work and concentrated on construction of roads leading to the main roads as transport facilities were a dire necessity. The Galle and Matara districts centres too helped us.

The news reached us that a certain group at Bundala was harassing our workers, especially in the camps where road construction was monitored. Especially in the evenings drunkards had begun to enter these camps and molest our crowd. On inquiry I discovered that these molesters were those who dislike the exposure of the village so that their nefarious activities could go on immune to Police searches.

But I did not pay much heed about the problem, optimistic that they would come round. But eventually something unexpected happened. Things went from bad to worse. Not only the Sarvodaya staff personnel but the Thero too were subject to harassment. I decided to do something.

On a Sunday morning along with Neetha and the children and a student lodging with us, I drove in my jeep to Bundala. Lunch was packeted. But I did not disclose the real nature of our trip and pretended it to be a family gathering to avoid tension in the children.

Ven. Thiranagama Ratanasara Thero too was away in Thailand and there was no other elder to guide our workers, another matter that prompted my trip.

By about 11 am we reached Bundala centre where a few of our boys and girls began chatting to them after which Neetha and the children strayed to the nearby forest area to view some migrated birds.

On news of my arrival people began to gather. They spoke appreciating our services and complained that no high officer or politician ever visited them and said that the Thero and Sarvodaya workers were their only saviours.

While this conversation was going on we heard somebody shouting. The 'somebody' now entered through the gate. Who it was, was not clearly visible due to the siting of the building. Now I saw my visitors getting restless.

Then one of the younger crowd entered and announced "Gambare has come and is making a fuss."

"Who is Gambare," I asked.

"They are our antagonists. Sir, villagers call him Gambare. He leads the group who makes Seeni Karingjan. It is his thugs who intimidate us."

Now the verbal tirade get louder and not one voice but several voices were heard. Some of the crowd tried to repress them but it was futile. The situation got worse and my visitors afraid that these thugs could have surmised that another Shramadana was to begin today had come to sabotage it. If the bhikku was here, they said they would not have been so aggressive but the knowledge of his absence emboldened them.

Silently I lent ear to the row. I could hear them shouting that no one from outside the village would be allowed to construct roads here and if any villager supported the outsiders that they too would be chased out. 'Kahakadaya' was behind all this, I heard another say. It was obvious that they were fully drunk and that it was the Venerable they were describing as Kahakadaya. (one clothed in yellow). This derogatory remark just infuriated me and I walked towards the gate.

A bare bodied man of about 35 years, swarthy in complexion and strongly built and bearded was standing near the gate and shouting, swaying in his inebriated state. About 4 other stooges of him were displaying similar behaviour, their sarongs raised. The smell of liquor emanating from them, I just could not bear.

"Aren't all of you drunk? I will not allow any drunkards to enter our premises," I said.

The emotion that surged within me was uncontrollable. After my outburst, the man who had one foot on the bamboo gate put down his leg and also stretched out his folded sarong. Now gazing at me with red eyes, his lips began dancing as if trying to say something.

Without allowing him to speak I spoke firmly, "Don't talk a word, you are not in a position to talk. Now listen to me and get out. If you have anything to say, come and say it when you are sober".

I saw the faces of the other four wilt. They stood as if rooted to the ground.

"I heard what you called a bhikku that we venerate highly. Are you a Buddhist? Or at least are you humans? Is this the way you respect our clergy?"

I just blurted out. Not blurted, but screamed out the words. The bearded thug stared at me as if I was a ghost.

I went to him closer.

"Why are you still here? Get out. And comeback when you are normal. These premises were not built to house drunkards, but to house virtuous people. This is a sacred place."

As the liquor gave a foul smell, I was talking keeping my nose pressed.

Now the lion in him had tamed. He had forgotten his Sinhala. After staring at me further deforming his mouth he retreated like an old cock. The other four too completely flustered followed him meekly.

"Very good. They will not bother our children again."

I heard someone say jubilant.

"No body here lambasted them direct like that. Now they will not trouble any one."

Disgust overwhelmed me. I wanted to be alone. So I walked to the border of the land, sat under a tree and gazed on a running brook. Soon a young boy brought a kurumba (young coconut) to me and I thanked him. The kurumba water cooled my mind and body. I walked back leisurely. By this time Neetha and her children had returned and had been apprised by the crowd of the events.

Neetha took out my lunch packet without saying anything. But I had no appetite for food. Yet as the children were hungry, I sat down for lunch with them. Since Neetha had brought all the utilities as plates, spoons, serviettes, we did not bother anybody.

I took my lunch in silence. But tranquility was still distant from my mind. Even as I ate, Gambare's figure rose before me. As I visualized how he stared at me with one foot on the bamboo pole and his sarong raised, why didn't maitree flood within me for him despite my talking of compassion always?

Gambare did not belong to the urban underground world of murderers nor was he a terrorist. Poverty, ignorance and lack of guidance had made him what he is deforming an original innocent man. It was that innate discipline within him that made him subdue when I lashed out at him. Wasn't it liquor that had made him blabber and insult our venerables? When I scolded him and criticized him wasn't it the realization of his guilt that made him so meek.?

I have come across such characters even before. They descend to such situations since nobody is there to show them love, to be compassionate and guide them. If the background is shaped well, they resort to the correct path.

What Sarvodaya should do is to understand this reality and give them the correct guidance. Otherwise such men drift down to a deep vortex of non-return. The instant anger that rose within me, rejected such a neutral comprehension. But like hidden embers the realization was now lighting up.

After lunch I came out and spoke to the boy who had given me kurumba. I got to know from him where Gambare lived and got into the jeep alone. Neetha looked at me but I did not talk to her. She knows by intuition how my mind works. So she just sat there talking to the people.

Within 5 minutes I entered Gambare's boutique sited on a slope by the fields. I got down from the jeep. Gambare was seated on the 'Pila' in conversation with somebody. As I walked in, he watched me with amazement. It was a small boutique with meagre provisions. Gambare had been just getting ready to chew betel.

I gave a broad smile and walked in saying 'Ayubowan'.

He greeted me back with the same 'Ayubowan' but almost mechanically.

"I thought I must have a leisurely chat with you. Are you in a mood for it?"

"Yes, yes, I am so happy you came, Sir."

He was looking at me as if what I said was incredible and a boy got a seat ready for me after dusting it.

"No malli. No time to sit. Have to get back to Colombo. I like to know your name, Mudalali".

"My name is Gambare. Francis Gambare. I am sorry I spoke harshly to you. That is not in my nature. I am a very compassionate person. But it all happened so that I was compelled to talk like that."

"That is okay Sir. Even we are ignorant people, we have lot of problems too."

I heard a huge nasal sigh.

"Good. Later we will talk about your problems". We may be able to help you even. But after this please do not trouble our children. They are from poor innocent families and are not of trouble to anyone. So why trouble them? Even our prelate is not a harmful person. I feel that you all harass our children out of a wrong opinion formed. If you had a good dialogue with us at the outset this suspicion of us would have been averted. Now let by-gones be by-gones. I came hastily today to have a good discussion with all of you but unfortunately things happened differently."

"True, true", said Gambare. "To tell you the truth, Sir, we didn't know that you had come to the office. Immediately I saw you I felt ill at ease. Though I am an ignoramus I could sense the meritorious qualities in you as I looked at you. We have heard of you. But today is the first day we saw you."

I placed my hand on his shoulder and spoke now.

“And now we know each other. Now all doubts are cleared. If you have any problems we will help. You too must help our children.”

“I will promise that ten times over” he said happiness flooding him. I handed him the Sarvodaya literature including dhamma books and propaganda literatures. I knew he would distribute them and read them. I came back with a very light heart and an altruistic joy that a doctor gets after curing a patient with an almost incurable disease.

Commencement of Sarvodaya Suwasetha

Photo 71 -
Malkanthi - then -

Date, October 14, 1975. A slim youth with brownish complexion. He had walked towards Meth Medura. He carried an apparently malnourished child and a girl child of about 5 months held onto his hands. Destitution was written all over him. I asked from where he come and purpose of his visit. Neetha too was besides me.

He replied that when the infant in his arm was nearly 10 months old the mother passed away and now he was saddled with two kids making him impossible to do his job. Looking for a childrens' home he was informed of Sarvodaya and that brought him here.

Though we had begun our pre-schools no kids' homes had yet begun. Neetha made milk for the two children. Since no children's home has accepted them and since it seems so cruel to send him back we drafted a programme to help him.

Malkanthi, the 10 month old infant only 8 lbs in weight was our first entrant to the place. Next, her elder sister, Shanthi. Today the number of Suwasetha houses catering to such kids has escalated to 600.

We began housing them at Meth Medura in October 1975. But soon we brought an old house separately for this project, No. 85, De Soysa Road, Rawatawatta, Moratuwa. Then the Canadian Ambassador helped to put up a two storied building, where a separate unit came up to house malnourished children.

Photo 72 -
Malkanthi - now -

Soon was attached to this, a venue for disabled females and its subsistence was borne by the Norwegian Ambassador Mr. Ervin Dingstad. Today the Sarvodaya Suwasetha has catapulted to the major institution in the country that looks after orphans, the disabled and refugees. It also rehabilitates young women led astray and looks after the aged and also the disabled in general.

Many philanthropists in the country donated houses to our programme, some supplementing the gift with income from the land the houses were sited in. Today the Social Service Department, Probations Department and National Children's Authority all direct their problems to us.

In the eve of the 1980 decade when threats to lives escalated by state and terrorists' movements the faces of these innocent humans consoled us.

73 - The Canadian Ambassador declares open Suwasetha - with him are Mr. Ronnie de Mel and Mayor Siriratna

Following services are rendered by the Suwasetha Programme:

1. Helping those harassed in the North and East.
2. Helping youth in rehabilitation camps
3. Giving refuge to orphans, children and elders with mental and physical disabilities.
4. Resurrecting the health of extremely ill-nourished children.
5. Running community health services for the rural populace.
6. Providing vocational training for disabled young women.
7. Running the 'Masevana' for girls subject to various sexual and other harassments and looking after their offsprings.
8. Running 'Savansahana' a school for deaf children and running branch schools in North and East.
9. Carrying on rehabilitation programmes for disabled and blind adults.
10. Elders' Homes.

Photo 74 -
Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi at Meth Medura

Photo 75 - Renowned spiritual leader
Wimala Thakar at Suwa Setha

Photo 76 -
Visit of famous actress Liv Ulman

Photo 77 - Visit of Canadian
Ambassador to Suwa Setha

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Launching of Dana Magazine

To provide a permanent venue for the Early Childhood Development Programme (Kids' programme) began under the auspices of Mrs. Leela Jayasekera at Meth Medura, we later bought the land and house at No. 20, Rawatawatta Road, Moratuwa. I made it a part of my daily routine to go there and help Mrs. Jayasekera.

One day as I was returning from this place, a slim tall gentleman was walking towards me. As he looked familiar, I spoke to him.

"Aren't you W. Premaratna who headed the Nalanda Cricket team?"

"Yes, I have met you at Nalanda and you played cricket for Mahinda, I remember."

"What are you doing now?"

"I began a magazine as an independent writer. But due to lack of funds work is stalled."

"Don't you like to run a monthly magazine for Sarvodaya?"

He agreed.

I invited him to come over to Sarvodaya when he could. And he did and got a good understanding of our work.

"We will begin a magazine in English titled 'Dana' for the edification of our foreign benefactors".

That explains the beginning of 'Dana', whose maiden issue was out in August 1974. It was printed at Sarvodaya Press. Editor, W. Premaratna, composer T.K. Bandara, head of our press. Photographs were all prepared by Vincent Sirisena. It is relevant to insert here an extract from the Editorial of the maiden issue under the caption - "Why was Dana born?"

"The Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya begun on a small scale has now transformed itself into a global network. Many branches of it have sprouted in other countries too. The myriad practical and highly successful vivid relief and developmental measures have all been eventually recognised by international organizations. The spiritual programmes based on self reliance and community action, concepts introduced by Sarvodaya have become hot topics of discussion in International Conferences and Workshops. To address these our leader Mr. Ariyaratne gets frequent invitations. Further the number of intelligentsia, community leaders and Sarvodaya specialists who came to observe our programmes keep increasing and they go back pledging to duplicate these services in their own countries."

Some of them have made entries like the following in the visitors' log book.

'I, as a Professor of developmental issues much appreciate this programme that amalgamates compassion and development.'

Mr. Van Pebeeghem

'There is a lesson that the industrial and developed countries can learn from Sarvodaya i.e. the need for popular participation and resource distribution.'

Bruno Leurent

'I came as a visitor. Now I am a Sarvodaya devotee.'

Justice A.C. Alles

'What shall we say? These men, their principles, the very place - they are highly significant. To save humans and the world we should learn from them.'

Wilfred Allan

'Anybody who ponders deep on the future of the mankind should support this movement to the optimum.'

Jim Breetweld - UNICEF, New Delhi

'Sarvodaya is development with a human face.'

Dr. Gamani Corea

Photo 78 -
Mr. N.de S. G. Punchihewa

Let these evaluations be. Sarvodaya is on a speedy journey. Crores of humans live today more as dead phantoms. Their perpetual companions are famine, disease, revenge and a melange of distraught conditions. In our zone alone about 4 lakhs die every year of hunger. On the other hand a segment directed towards production that focuses on consumerism are submerged by social issues, spiritual degeneration and environmental pollutions. Yet again the super powers themselves are enmeshed via a fierce competitive battle to enhance their power for which destructive weapons are produced at much cost, including nuclear weapons. The nurses and doctors who crowd around to save one life too belong to humanity. Sarvodaya Sharamadana underscores the honour and compassion of the human tribe. Our workers are dedicated to retrieve the poor from poverty and injustice.

The Dana magazine is dedicated to the task of disseminating the Sarvodaya philosophy and service to all four corners of the world and compassionately get into its fold traumatized humans."

After Mr. Premaratne, Messrs. Shanta Liyange, Carlton Samarajeeva, Mr. N.de S.G. Punchihewa and Jehan Perera acted as editors of the Dana magazine.

DANA
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DANA
EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SARVODAYA SERVICES

Photo 78.1 -
Few covers of Dana
Magazine

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Mahatma Gandhi Organizations

In 1973 I paid several visits to India and made contacts with Mahatma Gandhi Organizations. I was keen to perceive how Gandhian philosophy had infiltrated into the working of the social service matrix there, a fact I had overlooked earlier.

Mr. S.K. Mahadevan helped me in this task. He was the Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation. I located the place on the address given by him.

On April 20, 1973, Sri Radhakrishnan of this foundation welcomed me warmly. During the time a severe drought was affecting India and this Foundation played a major role to alleviate the sufferings following it. Campus students' labour was utilized to construct wells and repair tanks. Everybody worked together transgressing social boundaries, a credit to the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

Gandhi Peace Foundation

The basic aim of the foundation apparently is the eradication of the inequalities of society through "Gandhian Technology" along with experimenting how his philosophy could be utilized as an instrument for a salutary social transformation. Especially the foundation wishes to encompass Asian countries in its orbit. The core Gandhian teachings circle around democracy, cessation of exploitation and spread of Ahimsa (non-violence).

Shanthi Sena is a wing of this movement and while "Peoples Action" its media vehicle. The School of Non-violence, begun in 1971, focuses on inculcating non-violence in students' minds hereby decreasing their tension and aggressive ways. The foundation even discourses with minorities as Muslims. In 1984 the foundation commemorates its 25th anniversary. (founded in 1959)

The editor of "Peoples' Action," Mr. Radhakrishnan gave full coverage to the interview he had with me in his magazine. He hoped to come over here, meet our officers and find out the possibility of establishing a research unit here to carry out the same objective.

In 1979 the foundation launched their Gandhi Marg monthly magazine. An international advisory committee was appointed including me. They expected special help from me for global dissemination of Gandhian philosophy. They also targeted at a service institution in our island. Since their avowed aim was to uplift the poor, our movement was considered an ideal courier for this task.

Mother Theresa

On October 2 falls Gandhi Commemoration. On Oct. 2 1970, to commemorate this day (birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) a foundation stone was laid by Mother Theresa for the Institute of Gandhian Thought & Peace Studies. It was the 108th birthday of Gandhi. The officers considered the institute as the future venue for dissemination of the message of Gandhi.

Cordial tours were arranged between the Gandhi Peace Foundation and Sarvodaya. Accordingly Ven. Hevanpola Ratanasara Thero visited the place and Subba Rao of Shanthi Sena reciprocated this visit. The lectures I gave at New Delhi and Sevagram, according to Mr. Vijayam of the foundation served to throw much light on our work. On every Gandhi commemoration day I was invited there.

A Long Tour

Mr. Radhakrishnan asked me whether I could come over for 15 days to address a number of conferences. As he volunteered to provide food and lodging and other expenses, I agreed. I further said that I look forward to meet Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, and Acharya Vinobha Bhave. Mr. Sri Radhakrishnan sent me my itinerary accommodating many plans.

On September 20, I went to Madras and that very night to

Nagpur. Then on to Wardha and from there to Bombay by train. Then via Ahamedabad I flew back to Delhi and went by train on the 30th to Allahabad. I stayed here on Oct 1 and 2, and took part in the Gandhi birthday celebrations held at Allahabad University. Mr. Radhakrishnan escorted me whenever possible and saw to my needs.

After this I entrained and went to Nagalsara and from there travelled to Varnasi, where I met Jayaprakash Narayan. Back I flew to Delhi and then flew to Madras. At every place and venue I delivered lectures.

Gandhi Bhavan
Birthday Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi

The inimitable concepts of Gandhi and their significance plus the provisions of spiritual and practical result of these concepts to the upcoming generation were the objectives of the Gandhi Peace Foundation. The Gandhi Bhavan attached to Allahabad University too was a result of its endeavours. Dr. J.S. Mathur, Director of Gandhi Bhavan invited me to chair the ceremony scheduled for Oct. 2. Since travel abroad at this time was forbidden he had made a request to the Sri Lanka High Commissioner to help me. In this letter he had written to help the Sri Lankan Gandhi who won the Magsaysay award.

I stayed at Mathur's house. In the Institute was set up a library to encourage the above mentioned research going on. Steps had been initiated through varied activities to grasp the Gandhi philosophy and to encourage students and intellectuals to peruse these teachings and those more interested in the philosophy. Research was also launched on how these teachings can serve the general welfare and help in solving international issues.

Gandhi Bhavan was formed in 1961 - out of the link between the University Grants Commission and the Mahatma Gandhi Commemoration Fund. Weekly classes, conferences of a senior level, publication of Gandhian literature, research and lectures were held there. Actually it had been the dream of Mr. Mathur to establish an educational institute revolving around Gandhian philosophy. But finances were lacking. Even the Grant Commission gave meagre funds.

I delivered my lecture encouraging the services of this venue. I have been here two weeks, I said and I feel this to be an excellent project. If not for this a catalyst for the intellectual nourishment of our youth would have been "lost."

My speech was broadcast all over India by All India Radio.

1973/74

An article of mine appeared in the People's Action Magazine along with my address.

1974

Jammu Kashmir Gandhi Smarak Nidhi organised a state-level conference for youth in Uttar Pradesh, which Sri Jayaprakash Narayan too attended. Held in 1974 it targeted at solving youth problems. Its organizer Mr. D.L. Sharma wished to include a message from me in the commemorative publication. I sent my message requesting the youth to galvanise their energy for development. This awakening clarion call was begun by Jayaprakash Narayan recently in India. S.K. Bajaj of the Swasthik Nidhi had sent me the following letter.

"Last 6th we went to Wardha and met Vinoba Bhave. He has a special regard for you. He suddenly mentions your name and spoke highly of your movement and said his heart is always with you. As he spoke in Hindi I got him to sign in black and white and herewith I am sending it. He said that he is now moving with nature, as though he is nothing. (By this didn't mean that he is of miniscule form in the vast universe?) Bajaj had mentioned that today September 11 is his birthday. I replied that much more than annual commemorations it is more important to keep in mind the priceless work achieved.

I went over to Chandigarh to take part in the Commonwealth Conference. This made me travel via Delhi thrice. Devendra Kumar is a very active member of the Peace Foundation who deals with social revolution in India. He is also aligned to Vinoba Bhave's land donations scheme and Village Development Scheme.

1977 March

Participated in many meetings in India.

1979 January

Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi and his wife visited Sarvodaya with Mr. R. Premadasa.

1981 January

Arrangements were made to hold the 2nd International Conference in May 1981. Topic was Global Development and Sarvodaya. I promised to ensure the participation of Sri Devendra Kumar in it.

1982 May

Sri Radha Menon and Nirmala Menon a couple living in Calcutta and friends of Radhakrishnan (also social workers) came here on a 2-week visit. They had developed a village in the Danagagam district close to Calcutta and also taken part in Bhoodan Movement and Shanthi Sena Movement. They wished to learn from our movement too. Since we were on the threshold of elections the country was disturbed but we were not distracted and let them study our movement. They returned happily.

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Shri K. Ramachandran who gave us a helping hand

In the last few chapters news and dates about the great prelate who helped me have been given. Almost with their services stand out the services of many Hindu Tamil leaders out of which two stands out. One is Mr. K. Ramachandran, domiciled in Jayanthipura of Battaramulla. He lived here from 1956 to 1976 (year of his demise) and he was born on November 5 at Nagadipa, sanctified by Buddha's footsteps.

Along with his memory there seeps into me a line from a folk song of ours. 'Like golden strands that trail from the nape" for his golden hair cascades down just like that from his head.

When I got to know him he was the editor of Religious Digest that was very popular among the spiritual minded readership. Tall, slim, of majestic looks that made him stand out in a crowd, he was also an intellectual who regularly delivered lectures at Sarvodaya. Especially during Gandhi Centenary Celebrations he was of much help to us.

He worked in the CGR (Ceylon Government Railways) and after retirement he was one of the figures behind the Jayanthipura Housing Scheme. Out of his four children two were sons, one the famous eye-surgeon Dr. Pararajasekaram and the second SP Sunderalingam. All 4 children led exemplary lives like the father. They had a ritual in that house to chant strothras melodiously and even the Sinhala neighbours joined him. It was the two daughters Danalakshmi and Buvaneswari who led these chants.

My friend Mr. D.A. Abeysekera was a neighbour of Mr. Ramachandran. Actually it was at Mr. Abeysekera's house I heard these strothra chants that attracted me to his abode and then flowered our friendship.

Mr. Ramchandran occupies a premier place in the twentieth century as one who contributed to pioneer the peaceful and spiritual development of our country. The many lectures he delivered at various international conferences brought much fame to our island. He was a personal friend of great Indian spiritual leaders like Ramana Maharishi. Between 1956 and 1976 I associated him very closely and he rendered yeoman service to our organisation.

We share the same birthday though years differed. This coincidence amused him much. He led a very simple life. During the ethnic conflict no harm befell him as the Sinhala families joined to protect him. Yet after his demise a certain group had attacked his house and on news of this I went there and was grieved to see the damage.

Mr. Ramchandran's harmless and exemplory life is a beaconlight to me in my future journey. On April 26, 1976 he departed from us. News of his death flickered off a lamp within me.

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Across Australia to New Zealand

The 1970 decade provided me a chance to deliver a number of lectures on Sarvodaya and Buddhism in foreign countries.

On January 14, 1974, I enplaned from Katunayake for a two months tour. I spent a day at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and then flew to Sydney in Australia.

Many of old Nalandians had come to the airport to receive me having got to know the news from Mr. Sisil Weerakoon. He was successful in getting me into a Melbourne bound plane just 5 minutes before departure.

At Melbourne I put up in a house of Mr. Frederich Foster, an old friend of mine who worked in the Land Development Department in Sri Lanka once. He, his wife Lennie and children Mitchell and Martin were very hospitable to me. Frederich was a university lecturer there and we spent many hours discussing our past memories.

A teacher in New Zealand gets 6,000 dollars and a mason gets 7,000 dollars while a carpenter gets 8,000 dollars. About 70% of the people here get bank loans and build their own houses. But the Fosters are not happy and are waiting to come back disenchanted with the step motherly treatment by the whites.

I think it was Frederich and Lennie who spent on my Sydney-Melbourne trip and Melbourne-Sydney trip. At Sydney Mr. Cecil Weerakoon lodged me in his house. His wife Padma was very kind to me and together they took me to visit various places. I called Saliya Atapattu a friend but could not contact Percy Samarawickrama and T.D. Wijeratne, my old Mahinda friends.

Since my official duties were in New Zealand I flew from Sydney to Wellington in New Zealand. I adjusted the time one hour ahead. Wellington reminded me of my home town Galle. They are both beautiful cities by the sea.

At the airport I met Alwin Arnold and Ruth Southerland, both Maoris. They lodged me at Pegers Hotel in Dillis Street in Wellington.

'CORSO' had organized my first meeting. CORSO was an umbrella organization of all NGOs, hence they had just begun international connections. Mark Brian MacCall of the FAO and another foreign speaker were invited for a Special Education Conference along with me.

The seminar was held in a scenic village round Otaki, 10 miles off Wellington in a spacious complex replete with halls, dormitories, dining hall cum garden.

Just by the conference hall runs an idyllic shallow river yet deep enough to swim. We were in the habit of bathing in this river. We met some other participants including Mrs. Amelia Rokotuvana, a member of YWCA of Fiji Islands. I picked up a stone pelted it on the surface of the river, but unfortunately my ring too was pelted along with it. We searched for it in vain. The ring was a gift from my mother. How was I to tell her that reverting to a boyish act had led to its loss?

This Conference was organized in a novel way. i.e. it was organized through dis-organization, participants were of different status and from all walks of life comprising education ministers, directors of education, university professors, teachers of secondary schools, students, representatives of voluntary organisations, Brian MacCall and myself.

The opening speech was made by Tony Miganten, Professor of Education of Auckland University. Mr. Alwin Arnold elaborated on utilizing the CORSO Institute as Education Research centre. Issue was the continuation of International understanding and organization of social science courses too were discussed. I spoke on Education and Sarvodaya and also held talks on some other topics.

Mr. Brian McCall's lecture was excellent. A memory etched in me is my elucidation to a young girl on the link between the youth and education with special emphasis on how Buddhist philosophy is woven into it. She was a revolutionary girl who lacked formal education. She telephoned a few months later and informed me about her reformation.

After the seminar I visited several places of interest in New Zealand delivering lectures in social and educational institutions.

My New Zealand tour was completely organized by CORSO and either Mr. Arnold or Ms. Southerland escorted me. Sometimes both came along. Hence I did not feel lonely at all. Ruth Southerland later came over and spent a week with us. Arnold was a Maori and when I went back to New Zealand in 2000 he had changed his name.

I felt that lodging in his house would give an insight into the Maori way of living. I got to know the family members i.e Diana, Vinda, Mashi, Tonya and others. A visit to the Maori community center was an exposure to their ancient arts and crafts and customs. I talked to them of our own Buddhist way of life in a gathering parallel to our Sarvodaya family gathering. At times I used to climb the hillock by their house and enjoy the natural beauty.

On January 29, 1974 I flew to Christchurch city with Amelia, Alwin and Ruth. One Peter White Lock was hospitalised after the seminar and we visited him. Amelia complained to me about how the multi-national companies have strangled the Fiji economy while fattening themselves. I lodged that night at Mr. Maurice Ward's house.

The Commonwealth Games were being held then at Christchurch and the Queen of England, Prince Phillip, Charles and Anne and other members of the Royal Family too were there. We also watched the games for about an hour. Robert Consedin and his wife Patricia were our hosts here and they were helped by Walter and Enid Buffold. I also lectured to CORSO members, made a speech at Teachers' Union, did a tour of a commune and met a trade delegation.

Next I flew to Dunedin city, a flight of 20 minutes. This was to address a meeting organized by CORSO. They were agog with searching for an alternative to the present scheme of big countries exploiting poor countries, and letting the latter stagnate in the same condition. I got orders for the Batiks which I took to all these places. Other than my normal theme I spoke on Buddhist philosophy. There were several Buddhists in the audiences.

On February 2, I flew to Wellington. I visited a village of Hot water springs and spent the night in a farm where live about 3000 sheep and cattle.

In Auckland I met some members of the Western Buddhist Association. Among them were Mr. Upasaka Akshabhaya, Mr. Neol Johnson who intended to be ordained in Sri Lanka and Upasaka Arienda of London Aryaker Buddhist organization. I gave a lecture at Northstone Teachers College. In Auckland I put up in a house of Mr. Goy Elawill whose two children got very friendly with me and they cried when I was to leave to the airport.

I promised them I would return.

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From New Zealand to Canada

Never would I forget the panoramic view of the snow capped mountains backgrounded by azure skies I witnessed around the South Pacific Ocean as I flew from Auckland airport to Tahiti airport. I spent only one hour in Tahiti Islands and from there flew to Los Angeles. I had to put forward my clock 24 hrs ahead as I had crossed the Meridean line. The sky scraping buildings of Los Angeles built in a straight line are terrifying in size. Over Sacremento, viewing the snow capped hills again I flew to Vancouver.

I noted down a slogan displayed in Vancouver city that ran as follows:

> "Bless those who declare war, for they are too old to
> set out for war and die"

At 10.30 a.m. in February 4, 1974 we reached Vancouver airport. The mist that rose about 25 feet delayed embarkation.

Prof. Hollanda and Dr. Ames of Columbia University had informed that they would meet me at the airport. But the first person I saw there was Lakshman Sirimanna, an old Nalandian. This boy's mother was staying at Kahuragalewatte off Talangama and was close to us as her children studied at Nalanda. Lakshman had been an ardent worker of Sarvodaya and these factors had made the Professor send him to receive me. I was happy to see this well disciplined youth.

As I had to spend a few days at this university. Room No. 30 in Faculty Club was allotted to me. Professors Hollanda and Ames met me here and handed me a cheque for 200 dollars sent by Prof. Radcliffe. I had dinner at a Chinese hotel and had a good sleep.

Next day Dr. Scott took me to an educational conference at Richmond Hotel. One Dr. Harold impressed with my speech got me to meet a clergy member named Revd. George Ripold.

He taped our conversation and I met a number of Sri Lankan students there. Among them were Sumanadasa Abeysekera and Amerasinghe. I was invited for lunch at Mr. Sumanadasa's where a press briefing too was held.

Next day I met Dr. Tissa Fernando and his wife Shriyani at whose house I had lunch. I spent the evening with Mrs. Abeysekera and Dr. Edo a Japanese and his wife Lucky, dining in a Japanese hotel. I delivered a lecture on Buddhist philosophy to a class of Dr. Edo and addressed the total university body in the afternoon. Due to the time change I found it difficult to eat and sleep.

The President of the China Buddhist Society and World Buddhist Society took me to a Chinese Temple where I could worship the Buddha.

On February 12 evening I flew to Calgary and from there to Saskatoon. One Frank, deputising Dr. Blue drove me from the airport. The temperature was minus 30 and I was shivering with cold. I spent the night in a motel dormitory where I imprisoned myself. For breakfast I had only water. My watch too had dropped on the snow due to the cold.

I partook in a Conference attended by about 67 Red Indians and explained to them about the Sarvodaya Movement, while I listened to their lectures too. I had dinner with one Dr. Domino, a virtuous gentleman who studied Buddhism and practised meditation. After that again we had a discussion on religion. After an orange and glass of milk I slept at 11 p.m. I cannot forget Anne and Evan Coxworth. I met them and their kids Juliet 14, Jennifer 12 and Benjamin 8.

On the 14th up at 8 a.m. I got ready to go to the airport. I usually had an orange and a glass of milk only for my meals. Before I took away my bag I looked under the bed and saw my wristwatch like a frog. I put it in my pocket. After one hour of flying I was in Winnipeg, where all the roofs were covered with a layer of snow. It was one Dr. Lionel Steven who met me here. He carried my bag and we strolled to a luxury hotel through the snow. Here I met a Sri Lankan student Asoka de Silva studying for his doctorate and H. Wijesiri who was studying architecture. Having got to know that a student of mine, Dr. Thilak Pathiraja too was here, I phoned him twice but he did not call me back. I also met a student named B.C. Galappatige. I delivered a lecture at a meeting held by an Iranian, Mr. F. Jayadod, President of the International Students Body. On February 15th I held several lectures at various faculties. At a meeting chaired by Prof. Calstemayer I gave a 2 hour lecture and also spoke on Politics and Non-violence at St. John's College.

The extreme cold had led all vehicles to be heated up by plugs. Dr. Lionel Stephen his wife Laura looked after me and a high table dinner was held for me by the Sri Lankan students of the Campus. On February 16, flying at a height of 35,000 feet I reached Ottawa.

I was received at Ottawa airport by Professor L.G. Hewage's, two children, Mahinda and Sarath, Neel, Marina, Malcolm and members of the Janet Burns family. We had evening tea at Hewage's house and went in to Burns house at Deepriver. Next day, I spent touring in snow shoes.

Anyway two days were devoted to explaining the Sarvodaya philosophy. Next day taking a bus to Ottawa, I went with Mahinda malli, of the Sri Lankan Embassy, where I had discussions with the Lankan Ambassador Mr. William Silva, Secretary Arthur Abeywardena and a clerk named Wijedasa.

Then I visited the Canadian International Development Agency, where Mr. Allen Oliver his wife Valarie were in charge of the program. Many lectures and programmes had been arranged. There were many longstanding friends in the crowd as Prof. Ramon Lemontex, W.G. Nodo, Allen S. Davidson and Prof. Eliot Tepper. I held lectures in Ottawa and Carlton Universities and other educational and development centres. I also built up relations with the Company of young Canadians, Canadian Cross Roaders, Canada World Youth, Canadian CUSO, and World University Service.

End of February, Prof. David Radcliffe came and took me by air to London-Ontario. It was a cold night with severe winds blowing and the air flight was frightful. Fighting through the snow we got into David's car, opening his door with difficulty. By 11.00 p.m. we arrived at his house where his wife Shanthi awaited us happily. Their daughters have been named Sarah and Anjalee. Here I met Prof. Don Simpson, who helped us with the Canadian tour and also his daughter. Mr. Don Simpson was much interested in Buddhist philosophy. In London-Ontario I spent most of the time in the Althouse College of Education. I also got an opportunity to visit Community Centres, and took part in a TV discussion.

Patrick and Helen took me to see Niagara Falls, where I watched the antics of seal fish in a sequestered pond. Then went to Toronto airport and into Halfax. Here a Dr. John met me and took us to Cody Institute at Antigonish 120 miles away. Professor Luke Bagdop gave me lunch and invited us to lecture to the staff of Cody. Dr. Devis Hitler had arranged a lecture for me at the University and I spent the night at Professor Fred Wean's house. At Halifax I visited several educational centres and also visited the Red Indian Community.

From Halifax, I flew to Montreal and slept at Facility Club of Maggie Campus. Next day the 7th, I spent by visiting organizations that communicated in French. Mr. Murray Thompson, Executive Director of CUSO was a remarkable person I met here and I also met Fred Anderson, a writer who had been banished from US for taking up the Black cause. Still he is fighting for it. Mr. Ian Aelian, Programmes Director of Canada World Youth Organisation too became friends and we had a discussion about bringing a group of theirs to Sri Lanka

On March 8th, I left Canada and via Toronto flew to London in England. I spent a few days with my brother Weera malli and went to Netherlands, held discussions with NOVIB and returned to the island.

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Responses to Canada tour

On February 14th 1974, I first set foot on Canada. It was a months tour. The education Faculty of Western Ontario University had organised these lectures cum a study tour. It was expected of me to visit every State of Canada and lecture in Universities, State and non-State bodies. What I was doing here was a community service.

Prof. David Radcliffe was in charge of me. He was in charge of the Althouse College of Education of Ontario University and was married to a Sri Lankan, Shanthi.

Due to his participation in our Sarvodaya work here, he felt it imperative that I got help for my work from CIDA and Canada's International Research Centre. It was his intention to shape Canada's development strategy according to our tenets, while helping us and marketing our products there. At the end of my tour he prepared a report that ended as follows:-

Photo 79 -
Prof. & Mrs. David Radcliffe

"Sarvodaya has already been subject to International acceptance and fame. It has had an impetus on rural development in both Europe and Asia and Sarvodaya officers too are exchanged now. So we will go further helping Sarvodaya and help to build a Universal Sarvodaya network.

There is a collapse of the hopes attributed to UN development program begun in 1970. The interest manifested by developed countries to help developing countries is wrong. In fact, their plans executed in the 50 and 60 decades are being questioned now. Even the many theories on which they rested have been declared unsuccessful. Here two facts surface - one the issue about values, the second on on-going programs.

Within the last 16 years Ariyaratne has not only presented a philosophy but activated it in many villages. Even traditional developments there have been challenged by him. He had doubted the efficacy of the system of obtaining foreign loans that also encumber the people as debtors. He has surfaced a scientific basis that instil self-reliance and collective effort. Both non-State and State organisations lend ear to him. His tour has gone a long way to build up a link between Sarvodaya and many civil organisations in Canada and also foreign establishments working here and gone onto inculcate the depth of Sarvodaya philosophy to the Canadian audience.

His tour has been like a cyclone. I have presented various entries made on him, by the several bodies with which he had contact.

He is indeed just the person you described. Happy go lucky and wise. All who listened admitted that he has instilled new life into them. We thank you and those who sponsored his visit (Vancouver).

We thank you for sending Ari to Saskatoon. There are only a few in the centre, but the indefatigable energy he displayed is very useful (Saskatoon).

Thank you for sending Ari. It was an experience (Winnipeg)

Thank you for sending him. We will not forget the time we spent with him. After he visited us the Director of Canada Youth Organisation, Mr. Wilf Allen, was asked to spend two days at

Sarvodaya by us. He spent 10 days. It was clear to us that, Sarvodaya has gone far ahead in its strategies of getting peoples participation in development (Halifax).

We thank you for sending Mr. Ariyaratne to us. We at St. Francis Xavier University are of the belief that he is one of the highest development philosophers in the World - Antigonish.

So he has won the respect of all these individuals by expanding a very comprehensive spiritual philosophy that infuses intellectuals with a new political, economic and social vision thereby awakening society.

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The maiden tour in Japan

I landed in Japan in August 16, 1976. From July 25th to August 4th, I was in Washington and from August 5th to 16th in Canada. In both these, I spent a very useful time of which I will speak later. Now about Japan.

I came to Japan on the invitation of Mr. Soichi Ban, Director of JOCV and its adviser Professor Osamu Muro. They gave the invitation in writing for a series of lectures in Japan, plus money, the ticket and also got me the visa from Vienna office.

After they received me at the Narita airport, I spent a few days in Tokyo and then Ban's son, Take Ban and Harumi and officers of the JOCV accompanied me on my lecture tour. Hiroshi Kouroki, head of the Japanese International Voluntary Organisation and Professor Osamu Muro of Towa University acted as my translators.

I am writing in the verandah of a traditional Japanese house. On my left is a beautiful Japanese garden, across which a little rivulet of about 4 feet wide meanders in which fish of myriad colours swim in freedom. The garden is criss-crossed by footpaths around which there is a carpet of moss. Then there are rather large bushes like our tea bushes here and there, beautifully pruned. Fringing the garden and here and there within it are tall trees. Except for granite lamp stands covered with moss, the whole landscape is remarkably natural. On my right in another room Take Ban sleeps. A bamboo screen at the centre separates the rooms. When opened there is a large hall, when closed two rooms.

There are no tables and chairs but mattresses about nine inches thick in which we sleep. Beautiful mats cover the floor.

Photo 80. -
A Beautiful Japanese Home garden

You have to remove your shoes before entering a Japanese house and are provided with light footwear. There are separate footwear for the garden and the toilets. No luxury items clutter these houses which have only plain pictures, dining tables about 14 inches high, tiny electric lamps and bamboo ceilings.

I was invited for an exotic meal the first day by a friend of Mr Sutsugu, advisor to the Japanese Prime Minister. Then I was put up at the house that charges no fees but provides service for special guests. Even the Emperor's family members are put up here and Mr. Anura Bandaranaike too had his meals here.

Yesterday two elderly women looking ageless and two young women looked after me with traditional Japanese customs. They told me how to have a bath, the Japanese way. First you have to wash your body and step into the hot water tub. Then dressed in a kimono, I came to the parlour.

I sat for lunch with the other two while the women served us. They took our pictures including one of us with the lady running the house. She asked me jocosely whether my wife would be hurt.

After wondering around Kyoto for about an hour, I slept. I visited mostly ancient temples among which was one with more than 1000 Avalokitheswara Bodhisattva statues. Many tourists are attracted by them, but as for living Buddhism, it seems to be rather in oblivion.

On the 20th I visited a nearby large Shinto hermitage and after bidding adieu to the females went onto Nara where we first visited Yakushiji temple. I met Ven. Yasuva here and asked him about Buddhism in Japan. Actually the arama looked here like an office of a commercial establishment. Yasuva was head and I walked around with a junior monk viewing two large pagodas and a new Mandir with a large Buddha statue. I also visited the Todeiji temple that is supposed to be the largest Buddha statue and had been built in 752 AD. Made of pure metal it is 54 feet in height, 15 feet in width while an eye is 4 feet long and the toe 5 1/2 feet long. The Mandir encasing this statue is surmised to be the largest wood house in the world.

All over Nara are temples and gardens, where roam deer attracting thousands of local and foreign tourists. Takesan is well versed in history and Chinese language and literature and is a final year University student. All information was given by him to me in English. In the evening we lodged at a Japanese hotel named Sei Kenso Resthouse. Sahe Uchisan and Hiroshi Kouroki joined me there.

After a press briefing yesterday we visited Shinto hermitage. Ban-san went back to Tokyo and the evening was spent with JYVA officers. Even disabled, work here. I had a slide show displayed about Sarvodaya work there. Actually their humanity and hospitality are admirable.

Whole of today, I am participating in a research into the facilities provided in the city for disabled citizens. Research begins at 9.00 a.m. and I will be a guest at Madam Fui's house at night. Tomorrow we leave for Tokyo.

Yesterday evening, Heron San, Kouroki San and I went by 9.00 a.m. to a meeting at Naso, where about 40 voluntary workers were already gathered. All were youth and among them were 10 disabled people. They were very indisposed but sought others help only when necessary. There seemed to be not a difference between them and the normal humans.

From 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., we went on wheel chairs about 10 kilometres. Our Research team was joined by 15 school children. Though we suffered from the burning sun, it is a novel experience going through temples and a jumble of streets to examine facilities provided for disabled. We all had forms with us and organizers had walkie talkies, mobile radios and maps locating groups. They were very happy that I was with them.

Back at the hotel, I had a bath and spent the night at Mr. Fui's house, from where I came to Sakura city. His wife and 2 children welcomed me. The elder was a 15-year-old girl suffering from polio. She cannot manipulate her limbs and neck. Her face and teeth are beautiful and her smile too is very pleasant. But I was overcome with anguish as she exerted herself to look at me, reached us crawling on the floor. I wished that this misfortune would not befall anybody. But the parents loved her and carried her about like a baby. They told me that she needs my affection and I spoke to her, while they wiped off her spit. She showed us the Japanese letters, answering questions and in turn put questions to me. A very intelligent and beautiful child a sin in a past birth has trailed her. The son was of Jeevan's age, and he too was very hospitable like the parents.

At dinner we were joined by a community worker of JIVA and a medical student at Sakura joined us. Dinner was Japanese style and fully replete. As we were dining Mrs. Fui kept on bringing more food from the kitchen.

Next morning I had a glass of milk and read a book. Mr. Fui took me through a forest glade to an ashram and on the way narrated to me the history of Sakura city.

After breakfast they gifted me with a pair of chopsticks, two cups of soup and books. I took leave of them and in Fui's car we drove to Naso city. I was introduced to the chief and colleagues of Mr. Fui who worked here and then took me to my lodgings at Seykonso. There Harumi San and Hiroshi Kouroki awaited me.

The officers of JIVA had prepared a farewell lunch. With the gifts bestowed to me, we went by taxi to Naso station, from there to Kyoto and again to Tokyo we went by train. It is the fastest train in the world running at more than 100 miles per hour. Mr. Ban had sent his motor car to the station and I went to Hotel Koya Kapitan with Harumi and Kuroki who after dinner with me went to their houses.

Next day i.e. 24th, Harumi drove me in Ban's car to meet Ven. Omari, a Buddhist leader cum famous writer, Zen Buddhist activist and skilled swordsman. When the doorbell rang, a female took us in. It is a very modest house. The Zen training Institute was just next-door. Ven. Omari was a very placid retired person, dressed in a white kimono. He could be over 60 and his shaven hair enhanced his tranquil look. Harumi introduced me to him. I asked him questions on Buddhism in Japan, whether a Buddhist revival could be staged, how Buddhist ethics can fit to the new technological society and how a Buddhist resurgence can take place between our two countries and in the whole world.

I hope to encase all these answers in a separate article and publish in the Dana magazine. I invited him to send over Zen monks to Sarvodaya for training and he assented. He blessed our movement several times and said that it is a panacea for the ills besetting humankind.

After about 1 1/2 hours discussion, we got into our car and as we were driving away, I saw the couple bowing in respectful manner. Then I came to JOVC and took part in a press conference. The correspondent told us my ideas would form the main article in the newspaper on 28th.

I had to look into how voluntary workers were selected in Japan. Applications are called first from 97 states, a written test held followed by interviews. The 4 months training course is run for the selected and the curriculum includes language and technical subjects. These voluntary workers, numbering about 500 serve in about 20 countries. I prepared an article till about 12 midnight with Harumi.

Last afternoon, I spent delivering a lecture at Hiru Training Centre. Then I went to the Sri Lankan Embassy, where I made contact with Secretary Nanda Godage, Mr. Kaluarachchi and Mrs. Dias. Then I recounted to Mr. Bernard Tilakaratne about my tour. I told him the significance of establishing contacts with JAICA and JOCV. In the night Mr. Soichi Ban came to the hotel and after dinner had a discussion and slept there. He is also a very intelligent and quiet person. I gained much from his acquaintance.

Today, I bid adieu to Japan and got back to my land via British Airways. I am filled with a desire to meet my little son Diyath that I have yet to see. After I go home I desire to write on my experiences in Canada and America, but I wonder about the time available. I have to find it.

Yesterday I visited Morology Institute, Principle-wise we are the same, but the setting of Morology is luxurious. Carpets in every class-room, auto educational equipment in the laboratories, video tape machines in libraries, language laboratories, a teacher for 4 students, swimming pools, machines even to polish shoes - Morology had it all. Though a veneer of discipline was manifest, I wondered how the material comforts contributed spiritually. I lectured to the staff for one hour.

Mr. Ban bade farewell to me last night. Take Ban took me for a dinner and a view of the tallest building in Tokyo.

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A conspiracy to banish us from Sarvodaya

My tours here and abroad traversing thousands of miles day and night, getting acquainted with people and institutions garnered much benefits for Sarvodaya. Aid flowed in, much opportunity was provided for foreign training of our staff, a chance they never dreamt of. I advised them however never to be deceived by the tinsel of luxuries provided and always keep to the middle path and to follow me as an example.

As the work got too cumbersome, I began a system of delegating power. This had good and bad results in that some misused the resources in their hands and also betrayed the confidence. Here are some examples.

At one time a lady who had gained our goodwill, worked as an Executive officer. Her parents and siblings too, I regarded them as my family members, an attitude reciprocated by them. Their family too was a Sarvodaya family. I sent her for training to a University in USA, expecting her to invest her knowledge back in Sarvodaya, but she got down her family there and never came back.

The next person was a high officer in a State Corporation. Having got many external degrees, he was a good Sarvodaya worker. I got an invitation to attend a foreign conference and I sent him as a substitute. It was a difficult time for going abroad and all the facilities provided to me in this respect were devolved on him. Soon he got down his family there. Later I read in a newspaper that he died there.

After our Batik industry made headway, several markets abroad were located for them. Youths were sent to demonstrate how Batiks were done to increase the clientele. They came back and invested their labour with us while a few began their own enterprises diverting our orders to them. I retaliated by removing them though I was not averse to their progress. But it must be admitted that they did a wrong thing.

Such treacherous behaviour was not new to me in my Sarvodaya career. Yet in mid 70's some in our Movement conspired against me (an account of this is given in "House under the Breadfruit tree" by Gunadasa Liyanage.)

While I was on my World tour labouring for the Sarvodaya cause, I had expected those Sarvodaya workers would seriously work for the Movement, but something else had happened. Poisoning minds against me had taken place, saying that I am enjoying myself touring the world, immune to elderly advice. In fact these persons, had presented projects to the organisations I had solicited aid. This was revealed to me at CIDA office when I set my eyes on such a project. CIDA officers were bewildered to read a Sarvodaya project on a different letterhead. When they questioned me and were explained what had happened, they were surprised.

After my 3 months tour, I got to know about the conspiracy to get rid of me. I got to know about this first from Mr. Chandra Fonseka, who worked in the FAO, Bangkok. I stayed at his house in Bangkok on my way back from Japan. He told me, "I am sorry to say this, but when you get back Sarvodaya could be in somebody else's hand."

"Sarvodaya is a democratic organization. Do you think the members have deposed me?"

"Could be".

"How do you know?"

"I got a number of calls"

"You give me very good news if someone has taken it over, he has taken over the gamut of services and responsibilities involved. Further, Professor Ruby Kid of Canada has requested me to take over the post vacated by Paulo Freire, a famous educationalist of Brazil for two years. I could go there with my family and be economically stable".

On the way from the airport, I went to the houses of Messrs. Upali Senanayake, Karunananda and Hewage respectively and then arrived at the headquarters at Moratuwa. That very night I summoned a family gathering and announced that I would call for an Executive Council meeting and hand over the Sarvodaya reins and leave the country.

Then I went to the centres at Baddegana, Matara and Thanamalwila and finally met Ven. Pandit Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero at Pathakade Bhikku Training Centre and informed him my decision. To my surprise having known of my coming, he had assembled the three gentlemen I had met when coming from the airport, Mr. Kiriwandeniya, Ven. Hevanpola Ratanasara Thera, a few other clergy and lay figures. Now I announced my decision.

"Venerable, all this time, I have been working very altruistically. But now, some have taken steps to remove me. So I am not willing to clash with them. I am going abroad. Please give me your blessings."

Here I would not mention the powerful reply the Venerable gave. Then he summoned five other Bhikkhus.

"Mr. Ariyaratne. Now genefluct and repeat these words". Now he said 'I will not leave my motherland. I will remain in Sarvodaya with the objective of turning the island into a Dhammadeepa, to which I am dedicated despite all obstacles.'

"No", I said. "I cannot say it". Now the prelate commanded again.

Then I said it out loud and worshipped the Sangha and returned to Meth Medura. I summoned a family gathering and told them that I will go on doing my work. And before the Executive Council I again took over my duties. Though some left us in mid 1976 we triumphed over the crisis and went ahead.

Every human has selfishness within him. Those who are dedicated for social liberation should try to demolish this self as far as possible.

The obstacles that we faced like this saddens me. But reality has helped to cultivate equanimity within me. Now experiences have made this quality a permanent facet within me.

To all those whom I surmised to have been involved in the conspiracy I extended this equanimity and fulfilled my duties.

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Venue radiating the same glow

After my 1976 tour of Japan, I got the chance of touring the country at least twice a year, to disseminate the Sarvodaya teachings. Out of the many memories of these tours etched in me is the visit to 'Itoyan', a community village set upon as habitat of exemplary villagers. Year and month were 1981 October.

'Itoyan' settlement was on the slope of a hill in Kyoto city. I went there to visit 'Risso Kosei Kai Institute' and to deliver a lecture organized by the Asian Friendship Society.

Photo 81 -
At Itoyan village

'Itoyan' means in Japanese 'Venue radiating the same glow'. Tenko Ishida, the one who founded it is Japan's 'Mahatma Gandhi'. He is lovingly dubbed Tenko San by the villagers of Itoyan.

Born in 1872, he began building a settlement of this nature in 20 years. But later a massive scuffle between the proprietors and workers made him relinquish all luxuries and begin a society that knew no property rights. This was at Kyoto city. First he began his venture by cleaning lavatories of people without any payment but simply as a social service. When he got hungry he stood before a house in a praying posture. If something was given with pleasure he accepted it and rejected when it was given with a bad heart or with ridicule. Gradually, many becoming conscious of the virtue in him and his depth of thinking and philosophy clustered round him.

Photo 82 -
With Mr. & Mrs. Tenko-San

He had named his style of living. 'Aparigraha'.

When Tenko began this style of living, his wife left him, but not disheartened he gave her 10 years to understand him and then join him. She never came back but the two children came to him. He married again yet is childless. His two sons carried on his movement. Today the grandson, Nishida San is in charge of the Itoyan community movement.

I met young Nishida San in October 1984 who received me affectionately. Today Itoyan is a peaceful idyllic village where green foliage is abundant. The trees are festooned with flowers and fruit. One has to cross a bridge spanning a stream of fast running water to enter this village sited on a hilly slope.

First we went to the office and received the key of the lodging room. Then we went with a female guide to the dormitory along a by path overlooking with creepers. In the room were only mats, and no furniture. Later a small table and a pot of tea were brought. Nishida and I got to know each other here.

Photo 83 -
Mr. Tenko San at the
age of 91 (1963)

He explained about the village and community. The village had been built gradually. The only private property of the villagers were one long mat and a small mat. Long one for sleeping, and the small one for sitting.

Education and vocational training are given priority. Hence there is a pre-school, a primary school, a junior school, a senior school and a University. Total population is under 300.

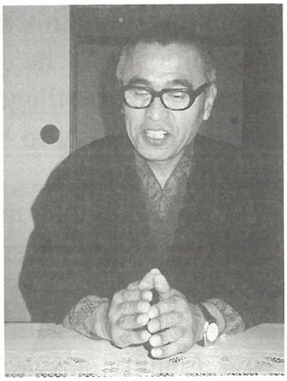

Photo 84 -
Nishida San

Other than the education unit and centre, the place has a printing press, centre for distributing seeds and and equipment, agricultural centre, production centre, a community kitchen and common dining hall and several other buildings.

An amazing silence prevails in the village, an atmosphere manifest in our forest hermitages. No building is locked up. No cash used. The place is ultra clean. No waste matter and no flies, no mosquitoes.

Itoyan can be dubbed as a showcase of peace and non-violence. Further it demonstrates Tenko San's saying 'Once ownership is disowned, one is endowed with unlimited resources.'

In the evening was held a meeting of Iyotan village at about 5.00 p.m. just like our family gathering. All were seated on mats. There was sex segregation. The chief now entered. He lit a camphor stick before the Buddha statute and then a small boy chanted sutras in a melodious tone. The ritual was repeated next morning at 6.00 a.m.

People from neighbouring villages too come here to be trained in spiritual life practised here. Training period is 4 days. They are trained how to eat their food, how to sit etc. We also saw a group about to go to clean lavatories.

The day is April 18, 2001. I had gone to Tokyo to deliver a lecture commemorating World Food Day – as I was there somebody came and greeted me. He was a Japanese. Next I recognised him - Nishida San- I had met 16 years back in Itoyan. He has grown older and his hair has greyed like mine. I responded to his recognition, and he gifted me a photograph in which he and I appeared in his village in 1989. I accepted it with pleasure. He had come all the way to hear our speech. He met us after the lecture too.

Even my hope had been to build an 'Aparigraha' Community in the style of Itoyan community. But I was not successful.

Was it the fault of my followers or my fault?

I cannot answer.

Professor Osamu Muro

Prof. Osamu Muro gave the greenlight for the initiation of my long-standing relations with Japan. Hence I should write about him in this work. I first met him at the International Conference on Voluntary Service held at Strassbourg city in France by the European community. He was an adviser of JOVC. Again in 1976 April I met him at the initial discussion of the World Voluntary Association held by Action of USA. After this meeting I ended my tour of Europe and North America and took part in the World Congress on Voluntary Service held at Vienna. Here I met Prof. Muro and also Soichi Ban, Director of JOCV. It is on their invitation I first went to Japan in August 1976.

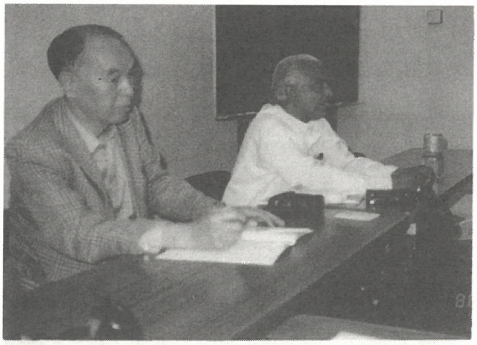

Photo 85 - With Prof. Osamu Muro

In 1977 May, Mr. Muro came to Sarvodaya headquarters in Moratuwa and surveyed our work. He joined hands with the Voluntary Service in Bangladesh and UNESCO, Japan and sent 4 Japanese youths and 5 Bangladeshi youths to Sarvodaya thus funding the multi-national Asian Voluntary Service. This was activated in December 1977. Thus he can be described as the pilot of first Asian Voluntary Service headed by Sarvodaya. In 1978 April he came again to meet the voluntary workers from Japan and to take part in the International Sarvodaya Conference in Damsak Mandira. In December 1978 we both participated in a conference at Kuala Lumpur and drafted the UN volunteers plan of the UN Development Programme.

Between 1976 and 1994, I went to Japan about twice or thrice each year and delivered lectures and took part in conferences. Always Prof. Osamu Muro acted as my father in Japan and organized many meetings and got me publicity through newspapers and TV programmes. He took part in the Asian Conference held in Sri Lanka organized by NOVIB and also in the second Sarvodaya International Conference held at Enskade in Netherlands.

I also became very close to his wife and two daughters. He even put out an academic paper titled 'An evolution of Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne and Sarvodaya Movement.'

Subsequent to this he fell ill and died while the bhikkhus chanted stanzas. Born on February 23, 1913, he died on July 7, 1989 after a life of 80 years. He is a great man who immensely influenced my life.

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'Coming like a Devil...'

I have already presented you a modicum of the great virtues of Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thera. Due to memories roused by a foreign friend of mine I thought of writing this too.

This prelate, you would have surmised, only associated Sri Lankans, especially Buddhists. But that was not so. He had associated many from various races and religions. Especially after he joined Sarvodaya, he cultivated the friendship of many a foreigner.

They were all highly intellectual.

The foreigner who came here last week, a German, was one such. His name is Wennemar Scherrer. He is a specialist in Management. A good friend of mine too he had been attracted to Gnanaseeha Thero's wisdom and understanding of the Dhamma. The Thero himself had reciprocated Scherrer's affection for him. Here I give an illustration of their friendship.

Two decades have lapsed since the Thero's demise. But if you visit Scherrer's house today at Bad Godesberg in Germany you would be able to see a large photograph of him and the Thero along with a photograph of the 'kuti' in which he later lived. (This 'kuti' or cave is still extant). Such was their deep friendship. This great man, in the course of his conversation did not forget to relate to me a peculiar experience he had with regard to the prelate.

It is a very interesting experience that I hope to narrate later.

Now let me introduce Wennemar Scherrer to you. According to my diary entries he has first come to Sarvodaya in June 1974 when he was 21 years, as the deputy of the Frederich Naumann Stiftung in Western Germany. Mr. Peter Pabst held this post earlier. Scherrer came to Sri Lanka with his family – wife

Helen and children who left early due to the children's schooling. The first assignment of Scherrer was to complete the construction of the Pathakade Bhikkhu Training Institute. Mr. Justin Samarasekera was the architect while furniture was designed by a Danish engineer. It was in this set up that the friendship of Scherrer and Gnanaseeha Thera flourished.

Soon, Scherrer became familiar with the latter's life style and his wisdom within him. He became a student of Buddhism and the teachings of the thera in this aspect were so successful that Scherrer later compiled a Management Course based in Buddhism and introduced it to the Frederich Naumann Stiftung. He also began a research work in German on the Sarvodaya Philosophy.

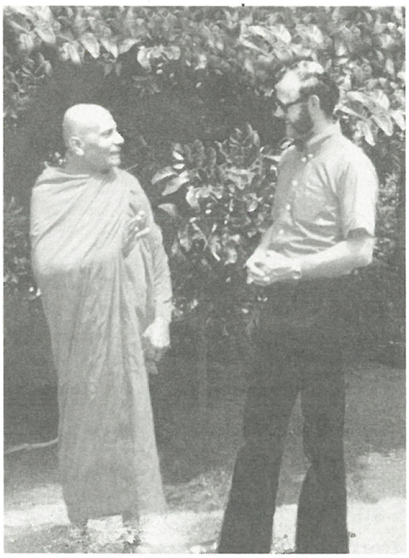

Photo 86 -
Mr. Wennemar Scherrer with
Ven.Gnanaseeha Thero

Having worked as a specialist in management in different countries Scherrer is now retired. Yet he is still a friend of Sarvodaya and he often visits us.

Now, I come on to my story. (Narrative by Scherrer)

“I respect the deep knowledge of the Dhamma and the piety within the prelate even now” Scherrer began.

“I learnt so many aspects of Buddhism that I was not aware of.” Yet he took life lightly and was never disheartened by the obstacles that came his way. Once a famous politician visited him at Pathakade. The Thero who had fallen out with the genre of politicians at this time was holding them responsible for aggravating poverty. Now he had come to invite the venerable to a function who however lashed out at him and other politicians.

"You all take bribes and harass the poor. If I can't demolish you all in this birth, I will come in my next birth born as a devil and destroy you".

His taunts flustered the group but they went away happily as the monk had accepted the invitation. He even made a diary entry and treated them with tea. After they left he told me "Though I said that I would be re-born as a devil and destroy them, I am so mild in my ways that I cannot destroy even an ant. You know it. But those politicians, they cease to be humans. During elections they pretend to be upasakas, replete with 75 lakhs out of the crore of seela preached by Buddha but after getting their posts and titles they turn to devils. That is why I put the devil talk."

Now the prelate adjusted his robes and began laughing out loud. This story epitomizes the character of Gnanaseeha Thero.

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A laboratory of hand pumps

On my Canadian tour though I made acquaintance with several Development Co-operation Institutes, I made close links only with a few. One of them is the International Development Research Centre. Its Chairman Dr. Ivan Head, I got to know and later Dr. Michael MacGary.

We executed many projects with IDRC. One was the Study Service Research Network. At first Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram and Dr. M. Tennekoon piloted this project and after they went abroad, Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala took it over. After this research was over at the Research office of Vajira Road, then they were held at Mount Lavinia office and then at Vishva Lekha. Forty researches were completed by him and even publications put out.

We even began a hand Pump Project with the aid of IDRC. We brought in hand pumps from outside and fixed them in villages, but later produced them in our own metal works section. Soon we even sold them to the government sector and made a big profit.

Photo 87 -
Women manufacturing hand pumps

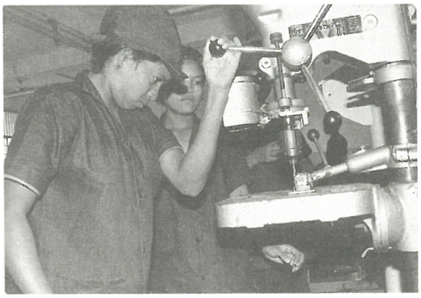

Photo 88 -
Women engaged in hand pump production

Photo 88.1 -
Women enaged in hand pump production

A special feature of this project was to get the participation of female labour who learnt to make them, fix them, and evaluate their use.

It was the first time that women were attuned to heavy labour and Padiyatalawa became the manufacturing venue. At this time I took part in varied special committees on water held in different countries. On the committee comprising specialists in the field were those who had no practical knowledge of the subject.

Once an engineer from Canada came over to evaluate our progress here with a professor from Singapore. We had completed our project and not only constructed a well but the hand pump for drawing the water, to facilitate labour even by children. This we did at our own expense. But the Canadian engineer said the well is not in the project paper and criticised us embarrassing the Singapore professor. Anyway I replied 'You may leave us now and go back. Let me know the amount of grant you gave us. I will return it. Water pumps are installed not for children to play with, but to use water. Especially drinking water has to be clean. That is why the wells are built. I am sorry that you cannot realize it'.

Prof. Lee of Singapore smiled. Later he praised me for my explanation. I got a word of apology from the Canadian engineer later while the money was spent on the construction of the well too was sent. Later the South Asian office of IRDC was put up at New Delhi and Dr. Vijaya Pande was its head. We had very cordial relations with him.

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Ven. Pimbure Soratha Thera

Into my memory seeps an air flight between Tokyo and Colombo. I was writing my memoirs. Seeing somebody looking over my shoulders I looked back and then I saw Ven. Pimbure Soratha Thera. (He departed from us about 2 years back). He borrowed my memoirs and read through them and then said that I should write these memoirs to the very end. Jocosely I told him it was difficult to write one's total life story.

But unfortunately, he departed from this world suddenly at a very unexpected moment, when I was out of the country. I had even arranged to begin a course of Buddhist Culture research with him. He had been linked to our Research Centre and his death was a heavy blow to us.

It was this great Thero who induced us to buy the land near Parama Dhamma Chatiya Pirivena, the Sarvodaya Research Centre and other buildings. He helped in the transactions too and I well remember the speech he made when the Research Centre was housed there. Our press Vishva Lekha too is housed here. On my birthday, when Sarvodaya officers hold the annual pirith ceremony, it was he who makes the Anusasana.

The prelate was born in the village of Pimbura in Kalutara district. Born on December 7, 1918 he was named Mudalige Gunapala and had been a cute boy. A nephew of Ven. Pimbure Sri Vachissara Maha Thero who was the head of Agalawatte Prathiraja Pirivena, he entered the Order in 1932 and was ordained in 1940 and later received the Pundit degree. Then he obtained BSc from Calcutta University, the MA from Claremont University in America and also became very proficient in Pali, Sanskrit, English and Hindi and also excelled in Dhamma vinaya and linguistics.

He further was the head of Paramadhamma Chetiya Pirivena and was a great friend of Dr. Mapalagama Vipulasara Thero. His sudden death is a big loss to the country.

What brought the two of us together was our love for the Sasana and the country. I hope we would again meet in this Sansara Chakra and work together in worthy endeavours.

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Genesis of the Dharmista Society

Moment, the term ‘Dharmista Society’ is uttered there visualizes before us, one of our eminent politicians and our Executive President Mr. J.R. Jayewardene and also his UNP that rose to power in 1977. The victory was mainly due to the slogan used at this election which was 'Dharmista Society'.

It was Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, lawyer and UNP Cabinet Minister who informed me that J.R. Jayewardene had borrowed this concept from Sarvodaya. It was during a conversation he had with me at a conference in the BMICH that he mentioned this.

Prior to the 1977 elections many politicians used to visit Meth Medura. Among them stand Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, then leader of the opposition and Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Mr. Jayewardene visited us first with the others. I was not in the island then. Ven. Pandit Gnanaseeha Thero, Hon. A. Ratnayake, M.W. Karunananda and Mr. Upali Senanayake deputised me.

Among the visiting group were Mr. Vincent Perera, MP for Colombo North, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, MP for Devinuwara, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Mr. Adikari, MP for Kalaweva, Mr. N. Wimalasena, MP for Senkadagala, Mr. Abdul Majeed, MP for Potuvil, Mr. Wijayapala Mendis, MP for Katana, Mr. M.D. Attygalle, MP for Kesbewa, Mr. K.W. Devanayagam, MP for Kalkudha and JR's Secretary Mr. Menikdiwela. As Mr. Athulathmudali said the term ‘Dharmista Samajaya’ had been picked up by JR during this visit.

After a tour of the development work within Meth Medura, when they were having lunch at our house JR had set his eyes on a slogan on our board that ran as 'Towards a Self-sufficient and Righteous (Dharmista) Society' and had told Lalith Athulathmudali that this could be a fitting theme for the forthcoming elections, an idea that the latter approved.

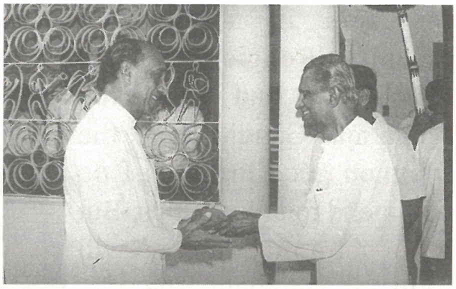
Photo 89 -
Mr. M.W. Karunananda receiving
Then opposition leader Mr. J R. Jayewardene

Another significant event had occurred here is that J.R. Jayewardene met Ven. Henpitagedera Thera, a prelate JR had imprisoned. They had opted to forget past squabbles and had been very pleasant to each other. In fact our prelate had even said 'Mr. Jayewardene knows what I was upto'. And Mr. Jayewardene had quipped in the same strain. 'And you too know what I was upto. Anyway I am sorry for the past unfortunate experiences.'

Mr. Jayewardene too had made a special speech, that ran as follows:

"Friends, I have known this Sarvodaya Movement for 18 years. But I saw it, heard it, and touched it only the last two hours, which experience inculcated much energy within me. The other MPs and Mr. Menikdiwela too underwent this rejuvenation. I have known Mr. Ariyaratne for a good number of years. He was very eager to get me down here. Even Upali Senanayake every time he could speak with me cajoled me to come here and Mr. Ratnayake, an ex-Minister did the same. But after 18 years, I came here and Mr. Ariyaratne is not here. His lady is here. Friends are here. We are now on the path to a better future.

Photo 90
Mrs. Seetha Rajasuriya explaining Sarvodaya activities to Mr.J. R. Jayewardene

I came here not as a politician but as an information seeker. Now I know how much movements like this other than the government can help in a country's progress. Religious leaders like Buddha and Jesus even Mahatma Gandhi had the common good in mind. I do not intend to talk politics. But if we get a majority, we will form a government. The government legislation alone will not improve a country. We intend launching a new policy and while doing our allotted work, we too hope to initiate work like this.

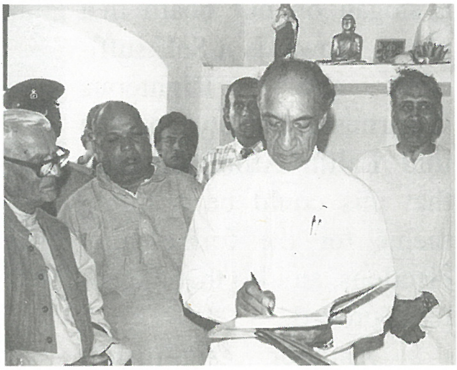

Photo 91 -
The occassion on which the Indian Sarvodaya leaders Dr. R. R. Divakar, Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Devendra Kumar met Mr. J. R. Jayewardene

Our MPs here may end up government MPs. Then we will wander all over villages and work for their upliftment, after associating them closely. Stages and books will be superfluous here. We need close relationships. We are already drafting a five-fold path to improve human life. Our method is to use pleasant speech. I saw the same idea on the banners displayed here. While the whole country is too large a slice we will begin from somewhere.

Next we wish to discourage the use of liquor. No taboo can stop its use in any country. Even MPs use it and behave badly. But we have sternly warned our MPs to refrain from its use, especially when visiting electorates and working with people. What we preach we should be able to follow.

Again we pursue the impetus to cultivation. You need to get into the field. But I saw in the home garden here, green leaves grown in abundance. This is an ideal situation.

The environmental cleanliness is very necessary. Many diseases – about 50 percent to 60 percent – are born because of insanitary conditions. Doctors are not necessary, if the environment is clean. Mosquitoes breed in coconut shells and flies in garbage heaps. I am used to seeing flies all over, but I didn't see any here. Whole place is clean. This is a very good example. Policies are necessary for this 5-fold path and we can work towards a better tomorrow through this path.

In August we hope to begin a journey. In India it is called Pada Yatra. We will wander from door to door and give on the spot advice on how to keep environments clean.

I recently saw in the 'Hindu' paper a picture showing the ex-President of India in a tavern. He hadn't gone for a drink there but to talk to the tavern keeper. He had told him, 'We came here not to prohibit you to drink. But to ask you to keep the place clean. This bottle is not washed so is the glass. Toddy is all over the place and attracting flies. So keep the place clean'. The Indian National Congress carries on this door-to-door campaign. Madam Indira Gandhi walked for two days in her electorate and spoke to the villagers similarly. We want to work out the policy independently, a policy you have already begun.

Mr. A. Ratnayake always tells me that we should work at village level. Today's governments go above this level. Mahatma Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan did the same. Mr. Samaradasa of Sarvodaya told me of this village level plan. The Katunayake express highway envisaged would demolish houses of poor villages. Mr. McNamara, Head of World bank has said that 60 percent of the world's population lives in villages and they earn an income of less than Rs. 50.00 a month. The Thulhiriya project is of no use to them. We should start small handicraft projects. I saw gas being produced in ovens and large industrial venues using them. So it is the small units that have to be developed.

So our Mr. Ratnayake will be very happy to see such a project. If we develop at village level, a village-based progress can be achieved.

So I collaborate with your objectives. So articulating the idea that were I to form a government one day, its objectives would be the same as yours. I wish you all the best."

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Arrival of the Prime Minister at Meth Medura

Following the advent of opposition leader J.R. Jayawardene to Meth Medura in 1977, the then Prime Minister of the Country Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike too visited us on the invitation of our Vice President Mrs. Sita Rajasuriya.

We accepted the PM with all due honour providing the view of all the multi-services going under our roof and finally took her to Damsak Mandira, where a commemorative plaque was opened by her. She was really happy with our services and our new building complex and wished us well. Later at the special family gathering she addressed the assembly and made the following speech:

"Sarvodaya leader, special guests, we get various kinds of news about this movement, sometimes making us really suspicious too. As Mr. Ariyaratne said, it was my husband who was to

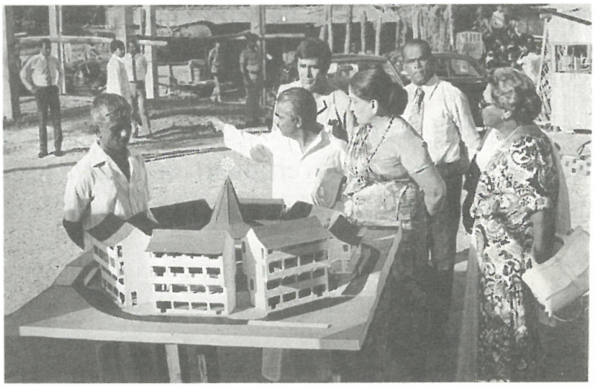

Photo 92 -
Prime Minister viewing the place where Damsak Mandira was to be built

go to Kanatholuwa in 1958, since it was he who was invited, but he could not go. But I personally witnessed the momentous social service work done by Mr. Ariyaratne with Nalandians of Kanatholuwa. Today this movement has begun on a small scale and blossomed out to the whole world gaining an international dimension.

As Mr. Ariyaratne said various attitudes surfaced. Some were drawn to it by ulterior motives. But a delegation from Sarvodaya visited us and explained matters. Convinced of the salutary aspect they presented, I wanted to be confirmed of it with my own eyes. I have heard about this movement, read about it but today I experienced it. Very disciplined youth seem to emerge out of this movement.

As Mr. Ariyaratne said this calibre of youth is now dwindling, causing us tension. The recent events confirmed our worst fears. This is a country with a great culture and enriched by the early religion of Buddhism. Hence, that youth of such a country was led astray is a great tragedy.

So I am really pleased that the main couriers of the Sarvodaya message happen to be the youth.

Actually, I did not come here to make a speech and here I am violating a rule enforced by me. But my defence is that I am not using a loud speaker. We have banned meetings. The recent strikes led to bans like this for which we get lashed back. Even yesterday, in Parliament we were lambasted. But that is okay, since all this we do for the sake of the nation and the country. So a surfeit of laws results. So I must apologise for breaking my own rule. It was Mr. Ariyaratne who put me in this difficult situation. Yet I thank him for his invitation and wish the Movement's tentacles to spread all over the island showering much service on the upcoming generation."

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Loosing the Piruwata (borrowed clothing)

Came 1977 and Mr. J.R. Jayewardene headed the new UNP regime. An elderly man living in a house close to Sarvodaya quarters came to meet me. ‘Why, early in the morning mister?’ I asked.

“I came to meet you Sir, as the Vice President of the party in the area.”

“Which party?”

“UNP.”

“Yes, what do you want from me?”

“After this when Sarvodaya provides employment, our party membership should be the criterion.”

“When did you pass this law?”

“That is the tradition.”

“No. We won’t succumb to that tradition. Tell the PM that I rejected your proposal.”

This person, who had donned on political horns now withdrew in a rage. Three months passed. He came again. Now the lion in guise had left him and he came to me like a crow stripped of its feathers.

“Why Mister, again?”

He answered very humbly, “Sir, my vice-president post has been taken away. Cannot you tell Mr. Tyronne Fernando to get it back for me?”

“Mister. That is the nature of the politics. Just withdraw from it even now and lead a religious life. It is useless wearing others clothes.”

He left happily, very sensitive to my advice.

149

From Meth Medura to Damsak Mandira

After our trek from the House Under the Breadfruit Tree to Meth Medura at Moratuwa, we got a wider platform to help the youth. A wide dimension of all our services had begun via the press and radio and orally. This attracted many a school leaver and un-employed youth to our gates. Yet our limited resources and space could not accommodate so many. Finally we screened the youth via our district centres and gave the selected, training in leadership and vocational training.

Then Mr. Karunananda and I discussed with other elders and began planning a new building in the premises. The envisaged maiden building was to be 100 feet in length and 30 feet wide and two storied. The architect was to be Mr. Karunananda. We all contributed our skilled and un-skilled labour for the task. After the building was constructed, the upper storey became residential

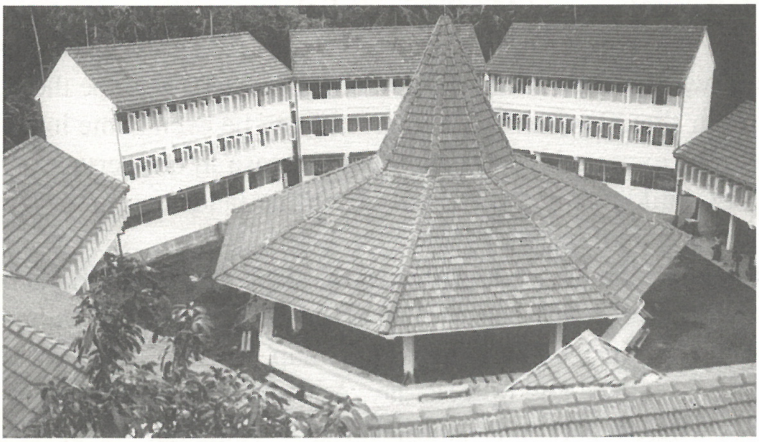

Photo 93 -
Damsak Mandira

quarters and the lower storey - venue for metal work. The building was named 'Karunahala.' Yet even this was not sufficient and we built another one, allotting the upper storey for a female hostel and the lower storey for a carpentry unit and Batik production unit. This building was named 'Mudithahala.'

At the time my wife, children and I lived in the section near the inner compound of Meth Medura. Our office and residential rooms of elders were on the other side. Actually we were all almost imprisoned.

Eventually we qualified for external aid, beginning with aid-from Frederich Naumann Stiftung of Germany. This body, having surveyed our work volunteered to financially sponsor our courses. We used this money carefully and saved half of it, especially from the items on food and the fees for teachers.

This money we saved to buy another plot of land. The area in which our headquarters was then not populated. Large tracks of land minus habitats spread around. Soon the land on which the present Damsak Mandira is built caught our attention. It was then almost a forest glade fringed by breadfruit trees and coffee plants. On the other side were a dilapidated house and a small house where a family lived. We talked with this family who agreed to sell the land to us. Soon we bought it along with another 18 perches, which we really bought with the private money of Mrs. Leela Jayasekera and Mr. Plasier, a Belgian.

Now we owned a rather large extent of land, emboldening us in our forward march. What spurred our progress? May be the purity of our thoughts, the selflessness or may be even some invisible force. We expected a corresponding increase in our services.

New buildings had to be put up on the lands acquired. I was almost in a mad frenzy about it.

Even as I ate, or worked, or read or slept, this problem churned in my mind. I trekked all over the land learning all its landmarks by heart. Soon I knew it all like a map - where the shrubbery, marshes, valleys, and hillocks lay. And soon I even identified the places where a particular building was to come up.

The family in the little house, put up their own house elsewhere with our aid too and left and Mr. Kiriwandeniya and his family shifted there temporarily. He was one of our course guide planners and today is in charge of Sanasa. Rest of the area was surrounded by jungle. Soon there was a light in my mind 'a Dhamma Chakra (Wheel of the Dhamma) styled building complex.'

Photo 94 -
Mr. Gottfried Wüst laying the foundation stone for Damsak Mandira

One evening as I was walking under the breadfruit trees, an amazing energy and an amazing sentiment galvanized me. I decided to lay the foundation stone for Damsak Madira then and there. I saw M.D. Abeynaike malli; who headed our Praja Sajeevi (Community Mobilization) unit walking towards me in shorts and a brown T'shirt. I clapped and called him and he came running.

"Why Sir?"

"Bring a mammoty soon, malli."

"Mammoty?"

"Yes."

"For what?"

"I will tell you that. Bring it."

He ran while I roamed searching for a stone to lay the foundation stone. Malli came running with the mammoty trailed by other boys. All were anxious to see what I was upto.

I located the place for laying the foundation stone. in the very spot where the Executive Director's office is in today. I told them to dig a pit there and soon they set to work. The pit was dug up. Now there was a pit and there was a stone. "Now who was to lay it? I would do it."

Just then I heard the sound of an approaching motor car, which were very rare then. Cars only came carrying visitors for us. So I looked in the direction and the car reversed and a gentleman sat inside. He was Mr. Gottfried Wüst, Director of the Fredrich Naumann Stiftung, who was smiling with us. I went upto him, helped him to get out and told him there was a significant work in the offing and took him to the pit. He did not verbally inquire about it but came ahead and looked in. I took the stone, gave it to him and asked him to place it in the pit without a word. After that he inquired as to what was happening to which I replied focussing on the fact that lack of space made us to buy this land and now he had laid the foundation stone for a new building.

"Where is the design for the building?" he asked.

"No tangible design to show. It is in my mind".

"Do you have the money to go ahead?"

"May be you, who laid the foundation stone would provide."

He burst out laughing. I thanked the boys and let them go. Then we drove to Meth Medura where he told me to submit the building plan within 3 days. He said when he got back to Germany he would explain matters to the directorate and get me the money. Mr. Karunananda overhearing our conversation asked me whether I could submit the plan within 3 days.

"Mr. Kalubowila, the famous architect is your student. Get him to do it." I suggested. He complied. Very next day Kalubowila visited us and prepared the building plan and an estimate which I handed to Mr. Wüst. Mr. M. W. Chandrasena too had helped Mr. Kalubowila.

Next week I went to Bonn in Germany and explained my needs to the directorate. They told me to go ahead with the basic work and the money would be released soon.

Now I had to find a Civil Engineer for the work. My brother Weeraman Jinadasa offered to help, which was a relief to me. In 1975 we began work on Damsak Mandira. We had got a monetary gift of 14 lakhs. Masons and carpenters were provided from Sarvodaya villages and all at Meth Medura provided unskilled labour. Daya nangi, a technical officer trained by Weeraman malli was in charge of the technical unit and helped to speed the work.

The Damsak Mandira was ceremoniously opened by President J.R. Jayawardena. Later Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike too visited us. She unveiled the plaque in this Mandira.

150

Prime Minister Moraji Desai clarifies leisure

The chief guest who graced the 1st Independence Celebrations held after 1977 JR regime was formed, was Indian PM Moraji Desai. Perhaps because Moraji Desai's victory over Indira Gandhi corresponded with J R Jayawardene's victory over Mrs. Sirimavo, this invitation would have been made.

I had got to know Moraji Desai, an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi through Sri Jayaprakash Narayan. But since there was no connection between his official tour and our personal friendship, I set off to Ampara on February 3rd 1978. I have never been invited for our Independence Day Celebrations. Hence, there was no need for me to stay in Colombo and I accepted the invitation made to me to officiate as the Chief Guest at Ampara Independence Celebrations, an invitation made by Mr. Yasasiri Goonewardene, at Ampara.

As we entered through the gates of his house, it was about 7.30 p.m. He left me as the telephone was ringing. Then he told me, that this call is for me. It is from the Secretary of the Indian Prime Minister, he said.

I took the receiver immediately. It was the Indian Prime Minister at the other end.

"Ariyaratne. I am in your country. Where have you fled?"

"Sir, I am at Ampara after driving my car for about 7 hours. I am just now in the G.A's house."

"No. You must come back and meet me before 7.00 a.m. tomorrow. I am at Queens House and have to address Parliament tomorrow."

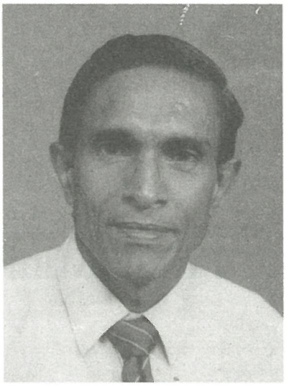

Photo 95 -
Mr.Yasasiri Gunewardena

"Sir, I am the Chief Guest at Ampara Independence Celebrations. Shall I come after the ceremony?"

"No, it is imperative to meet you before I address the Parliament. You are Mahatma Gandhi's chief follower in Sri Lanka. I am talking to you not as a premier, but as a co-follower of Gandhi."

Mr. Gunawardena sensing my crisis now spoke.

"Ari, you better go. The Indian PM's invitation supersedes mine. I will explain the situation to the audience, Now wash yourself and have dinner. You must start off at least by 9.00 p.m."

By 4.00 a.m. I was back at Moratuwa, the driver and me alternately driving. I entered Queens house at 7.00 a.m. and the officers led me into his room. Mr. Desai was seated on the bed and weaving thread on a small wheel. As he saw me he again began circling the wheel while speaking.

"Ariyaratneji, forgive me for breaking your rest, but I had no alternative. Whole of yesterday many Government and opposition MPs met us. Maybe they spoke the truth, but truth politically advantageous to them. What I feel is when solving a national crisis, though one's political greed is significant the long-term welfare of the country and nation is very important. Here what is given is as important as what is received. I wish to know from you how you approached this problem from the view point of Gandhian philosophy and Buddhist philosophy. Your ideas will be useful to me in my Parliamentary address."

I explained to him the Lankan situation according to my own conscience. If India was not to neutrally intervene the situation could become irremediable, I warned expressing my own fear. Our discussions lasted about one hour.

When he was questioned about the Indian situation, he said that his term expires in another year. Then Chandrasekar intent on becoming Prime Minister at least for a day will succeed him. Then they would destroy our coalition government and Indira Gandhi would again come back.

Moraji Desai then got down and burst out laughing. Looking at the Charkra (wheel) I said “You are always weaving, don't you ever rest?”

“Ari, the concepts of leisure and retirement are western concepts. To me leisure is the relief and mystic joy one gets after the- successful accomplishment of a task. Leisure for us is not synonymous with retreating to a holiday resort to lapse into laziness.”

I paid my respects to this elderly statesman and left the place.

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Housewarming at Damsak Mandira

The ceremony held on March 21st 1978 at our headquarters was one almost immortal in memory and festive and joyous to all those connected to Sarvodaya. The reason was that the ceremony celebrated the opening of "Damsak Mandira."

The chief guest was the Hon. President J.R. Jayawardene. Further about 500 bhikkus including chief prelates plus clergy of all other religions, Ministers, MPs, Ambassadors and special invitees graced the occasion, fattened by the Sarvodaya personnel too. The audience was about 5000.*

Here is the full text made that day by HE the President:

"Leader of the Sarvodaya movement, honourable clergy, Sarvodaya members, foreign guests, friends. I have come earlier

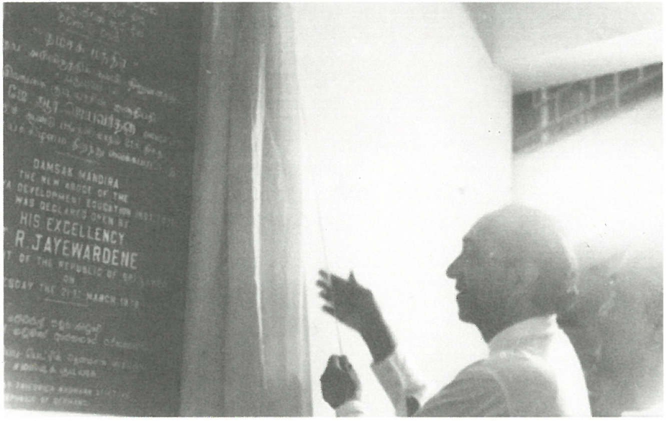

Photo 96 -
President J. R. Jayewardene opening the Damsak Manidira

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*(The song sung on this occasion and composed by me is inserted at the end of this chapter)

Photo 97 -
His Excellency addressing the opening ceremony

too for Sarvodaya functions. I have known Mr. Ariyaratne for a very long time. Immediately I got this invitation I accepted it. But, there are those who say that Sarvodaya is anti-Govt, that it is revolutionary and another facade of the Samasamaja Party. Some even say it is a terrorist party. But I have read Sarvodaya literature for a long time and never did I come across anything contrary to Buddha's teachings. All over here are Buddhist slogans and symbols. On your flag is Dhamma Chakra, on that brass lamp is Dhamma Chakra. There before the Buddha statue is written "Samma Samadhi". So there is an earnest endeavour to guide the youth according to Buddhist teachings. Even my UNP regime's objective is identical. Not only state administration but also making culverts, cutting drains, building bridges, all belong to the ruler's work. But the prime aim of a govt should be to build a man. Following Buddha's teachings I travelled all over this country for 5 years and have spoken at 150 meetings during election time. But I never reprimanded my opponents, never showed anger, nor used bad words. Always I expressed non-violence and truth and Buddha's teachings. That is why I got the opportunity to form the government to rule the country. Even my presidential flag carries the Dhamma Chakra symbol. This flag is the same. Our flag

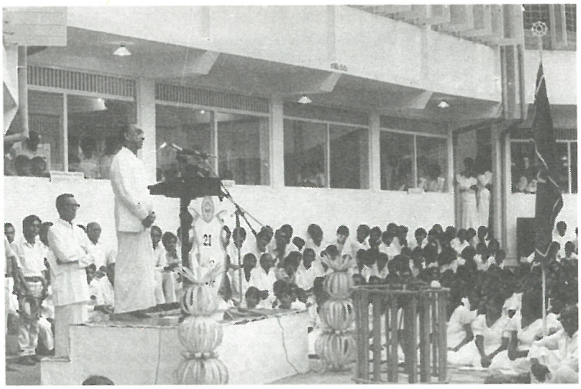


Photo 98 -
HE addresses crowd at opening of Damsak Mandira

symbolised a 3-fold state and our objective was to perpetuate a Dharmista society. So our two movements are almost identical. We too wish to build a free and religious society. You too wish the same. So we can work in unison.

The endeavour to craft a free society is a very noble endeavour. After we came to power, we did away with all taboos. We freed all youths behind bars. All those obstacles to freedom were disposed with. So Sri Lanka ranks today among the major democratic countries of the world. Though we cannot build a religious society in toto, at least the foundation can be laid. For the former aim is difficult to be realized. Our people can surmise that among our 141 members there are errant MPs. But I try to purify our coterie of leaders to the optimum.

So once again, I reiterate Buddha's teaching to build a religious society, you must first build a man and for that the leader too must be exemplary. *The Dhamma Chakra Pavattana sutta* presents the idea. So I am very happy with this Sarvodaya Movement leading towards this same direction. So my final hope is that you invest your labour more and more for the country's welfare.".

Damsak Mandira song

Following the Arya Marga (path) Back to Dhamma Chakra
Fleeing evil – radiating human worth
The Sun of Sarvodaya rises
Long live Damsak Mandira
Long live Long live (Repeat)

Faultless vision, sound mind, correct words, right action, taintless
life - these lead to a pure endeavour//
Samadhi // Samma Sathi

Here humans zoom to gods
Whole world becomes one family, a paradise.
Our service irradiates a glow.

Hearts of Ministers, Prime Ministers, Presidents amalgamate here.
So do the kids, the parent, the farmer, the public
Work in unison
Shanthi // Let the Bhikkus bless us

On the Arya Marga we tread.

152

The first International Sarvodaya Seminar

The first International Sarvodaya Seminar was held from April 2 - 7 in 1978 at Damsak Mandira. Several local and foreign dignitaries participated and the special speech made by Hon. Prime Minister R. Premadasa is recorded below:

Prof. Detlef Kantowsky, chaired this conference. Other participants were Mr. & Mrs. R. Premadasa, Mr. Dharmasena Attygalle, Deputy Health Minister, Tyronne Fernando, Moratuwa MP and U.B. Wijekoon Dambadeniya MP. Eleven special speeches were delivered by the following on the given topics.

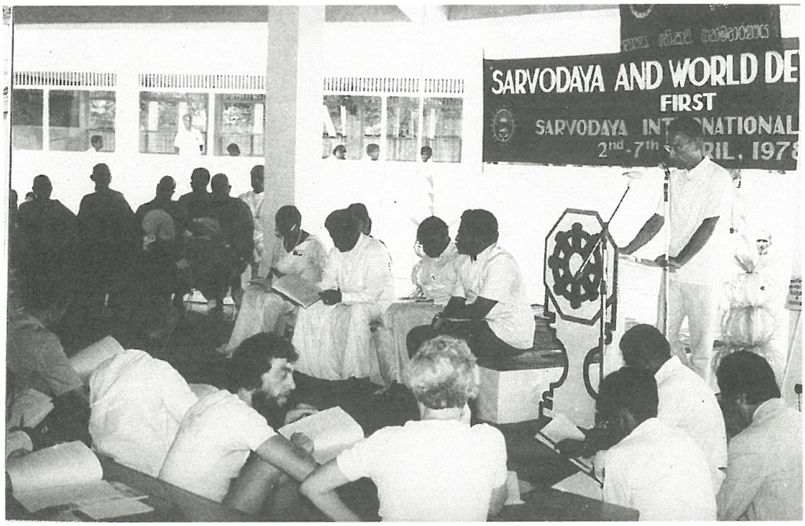

SARVODAYA AND WORLD DE
FIRST
SARVODAYA INT NATIONAL
2nd-7th RIL, 197

Photo 99 -
Prof. Detlef Kantowsky's addesss

1. Gunaseela Vithanage - Sarvodaya & Buddhist ethics
2. Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne - Towards a world vision via the rural experiences of Sarvodaya Shramadana
3. Prof. J.S. Mathur & Prof. N. Ratnapala - Sarvodaya in India and Sri Lanka
4. Prof. O. Muro - Relevance of Sri Lanka Sarvodaya to other countries
5. Prof. David Radcliffe - Sarvodaya in Europe
6. Mr. Maz Mohideen - Islam, Sarvodaya and Development
7. Rt. Hon. Bishop C.L. Wickramasinghe Kurunegala - Christians, Sarvodaya and Development
8. Mr. R. Krishnaraja - Hindu, Sarvodaya and Development

9. Mr. W. Scherrer - German - Sarvodaya
10. Reny Geerts and Jack Jansen - Vishvodaya
11. Mr. Paul Bischof - The futuristic development o the Movement globally

Photo 1

Hon. PM R. Premadasa ad

Speech made by Hon. Prime Minister

"Hon. Sangha, Hon. Clergy, all acting Ministers, all MPs, Sarvodaya officers including Dr. Ariyaratne, foreign dignitaries.

I first thank you for this invitation. I have come here to study the service programmes your Movement has initiated for the common good and also further to receive your blessings. I have no proficiency to lecture to you on this. Actually, I got to know about Sarvodaya from Gandhian writings, from his life story, from his endeavours to re-awaken India. In my childhood, I remember our own people trying to emulate Gandhi's attempts at energising the workers via the Charkra. When the Movement was planted here by Mr. Ariyaratne at Nalanda College, I followed its development very attentively. The confidence it instilled in me made me accede to any request made by its founder.

As humanity is fleeing from human values any attempt to reverse this trend needs blessings of others. This is an age ushered by the permeation of the internal and external facets of men by materialism. This is also an age when too many inventions of men have begun to strangle him. This is an age where materialism which was developed for comfortable life is victimising the inventor. But we have to give priority to the return to humanity.

Time has come to gather humans as a collective force that does not harass others. Men have created a state just for that. They follow religions for that. In this respect the State, religion, Sarvodaya - they are all targeted at one objective. Every movement should aim at surfacing the nobility of men. Herein lies the value of Sarvodaya in trying to instil humanity in the lives where humanity flees and men harass another. It should be realised that it is the man who suffers first. This is the first lesson for citizens

Photo 101 -
Mr. Jack Jansen, Mr. Reny Geerts, Dr. Theunis of Netherlands and delegates from Britain

and neither education nor basic units as houses have a great function other than this.

ARVODAYA AND WORLD DEVELOPMENT
FIRST
SARVODAYA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
2nd 7th APRIL 1978

Photo 102 -
Sessions led by Mr. M.W.Karunananda

I am much pleased with all the foreign aid this Movement gets. For Movements like this it is a universal necessity. Whole world is blinded by materialism. Now the realization is dawning that the advancement of science, various studies, resources development and various mechanism of wealth accumulation are just meaningless in a spiritually vacuum state. To first reform man, society has to be reformed. But today it is just an illusion. If each one develops society too develops.

This time we launched our elections with a message. We went under the leadership of Hon. J.R. Jayawardena, to the citizens with the promise of creating a just society. Some laughed at us. Some even began to call us "Dharmista" but the average men liked the concept. It was not a political slogan, but a genuine slogan to uplift the fallen men. The very efficacy of this slogan was demonstrated by our victory. A multi-racial, multi-religious community accepted it. Before preaching to others we should set an example. We should overcome our own blemishes. Gandhi made a mammoth effort to instil these values in the Indian community. Again he was laughed at but he had the boldness to declare that politics without principles was one of the greatest sins of the world.

Politics should be permeated by virtuous principles. Otherwise it is not politics, but something detrimental to society. Hence, I envisaged a plan of knitting the Sarvodaya Movement in someway into the fabric of our local government. Then the Sarvodaya blessing too will be with us. That already, this has been discussed at Cabinet level and approved, I declare with joy. Since your movement puts the human and his welfare in the forefront, we have given this priority. Man is supreme."

153

Co-operation between Sarvodaya & Helvetas

From the inception of Sarvodaya to the present, myriad foreign agencies have collaborated with us. Many of them are those who have come to study Sarvodaya techniques. Others have aided us with technology, basic aid and administrative methodology. Among these stands out Helvetas, which is a voluntary organisation formed for the dissemination of technical knowledge to developing countries. Working mainly under the aegis of the Swiss Government its connection with our work was due to a specialist of the Helvetas Organisation in Nepal. That was 24 years ago when he visited us and then went on to Jaffna and from there submitted a report about us to the main body. After this Mr. Thomas Zimmerman, who worked in Cameroons, Africa visited us, then went into Jaffna and Vavuniya areas and again submitted a project proposal. After this was approved Mr. Zimmerman and his wife Catherine came over. Two year later, a specialist named Carl Werle and his wife joined the technical section of ours.

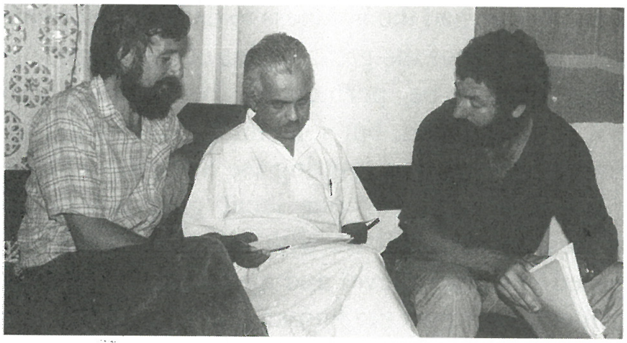


Photo 103 - With Messrs Carl Werle & Thomas Zimmerman

Photo 104 - A Community water scheme

Sarvodaya always focussed on re-awakening rural self-reliance. Added to the vision required for this, were 3 other factors i.e. capital for development of popular participation, rural technology and development management. The Sarvodaya-Helvetas bond was directed at fulfilling these three factors. Already Sarvodaya had undertaken the repair of tanks and canals, built tanks, established health facilities, constructed wells, community centres and pre-schools and attended to a gamut of other public work, but the streamlined technological aura in them was lacking. Helvetas has this objective of applying technology into such work in a very formal way. It was due to its specialists that our rural technology was revolutionised by Helvetas.

Our connection began in 1978. E.W. Külling, Secretary General of Helvetas and his wife Mink came in December 1978 to Sri Lanka and spent 10 days with us surveying our projects at Kahawatte, Rakwana, Galle, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Punguduthivu, Jaffna, Kandy, Pannala and other places.

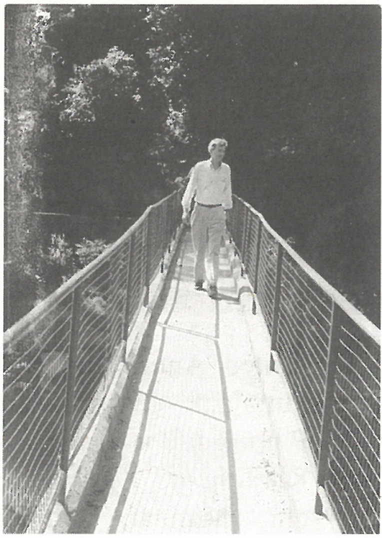


Photo 105 -
A suspension bridge

The first representative from Helvetas was Thomas Zimmerman. A very active Engineer, he implemented many of our projects. Karl Wehrle helped him. A very humble man he was. Among the services rendered by this duo stands out Gravity Water Scheme at Ratnapura, beginning of agro farms at Vavuniya, Anuradhapura and Pannala and introducing organic agriculture at Anuradhapura farm, launch of the Gravity Water Scheme in Kandy district, training of skilled labour. Sixteen million rupees were spent on all these.

Photo 106 - Constructing lavatories

Between 1982 and 1986, in many other districts, our programmes were launched under the direction of the engineers, Uli Steiner, Markus Schaefer and Rudolf Stark. The above programmes were duplicated in those districts too. Two other NGOs too were helped and the Social Science Faculty of Peradeniya University made an evaluation study of these. Helvetas invested into these activities a total of about 27 million rupees.

Between 1986 and 1989, Han Heinan and Han Pfiffner were in charge and encompassing many other districts into these projects meant a further investment of 40 million rupees. Local technicians too were trained.

Between 1986 and 1996, Mr. Otto Gottch, Markus Heiniger and Andres Wiederkehr were in charge as directors of Helvetas. The last still works with us. Publications in all the three languages were put out on these projects.

Today lakhs of people profit by the Helvetas schemes. Amenities provided were clean water, health facilities and farming by natural devices. The Directors personally visited Anuradha-pura, Puttalam, Vavu-niya, Punguduthivu, Karaithivu, Kili-nochchi, Mannar, Jaffna, Kandy and Ratnapura.

Photo 107 -
With Werner Külling, Andres Wiederkehr and Anne Stolz

I developed a personal friendship with Werner Kulling and Anne Stolz through this work. Related below is an incident that took place in 1983 in this respect.

Photo 108 -
At Zurich with Werner Külling

The racial conflicts made NOVIB delay its aid. They were specially affected by the murder of Dr. Rajasunderam, head of Gandhian Organisation inside the Welikade prison. Now we could not pay our staff. I went to Zurich, Headquarters of Helvetas and met Mr. Külling. He immediately contacted the directorate and released funds to pay the salaries to which act I am still indebted.

Photo 109 - (back row l-r) Anne Stolz, Han Heijnen, Heini Pfiffner, Rudolf Stark,
(Front row l-r) Uli Steiner, Markus-Schaefer, E.W. Külling, . A. T. Ariyaratne and Thomas Zimmermann - from the final decade publication of Sarvodaya - Helvetas

154

Rupa Nangi

A fact that gives me immense joy, as I look back on my past is the opportunity provided to youth to gain experience in foreign countries, a feat they could never have achieved strangled by their poverty. Many of these remain ever grateful to Sarvodaya and some still work with us. Others indulge in their own private enterprises with no harm to us. Others who have failed to do so make us the scapegoat and attack us. I regard all of them with Upekkha (equanimity).

Recently, I attended the funeral of Mr. W. D. Petan at his house in Matugama, Ovitigala. He was in charge of our unsuccessful Ruwanmaduwa project in the 1960 decade. There I met Rupa Nangi, (W.A. Rupawathi) one of our pre-school teachers. She greeted me heartily and said that thanks to me, that she was leading a stable life neither rich nor poor. I still remember Mr. Marcus Vanderkamp, a Netherlander who produced documentaries on Sarvodaya titling one film "Rupakka". I told Rupa to send her Sarvodaya memoirs and she complied. Herewith is her letter of memories.

“At this time the biggest luck that had come my way was my trip to Netherlands. It is a long story which I will narrate briefly.

I was born on 14th February 1954 in a very remote hamlet named Galleniya Kanda sited in Matugama area of Pas Yodun Rata in Kalutara district. Bordered on one side by the Sirikandura estate range and on the other side by a massive mountain ridge, our village was on a hill. No vehicle can enter it. I attended Ovitigala Maha Vidyalaya walking 2 miles there each day up and down. Due to travelling difficulties, school education too became a problem. I had only one uniform. One day as the washed uniform had not dried, amma (mother) cut her white cloth and sewed me a uniform. My parents and siblings and I lived in a mud hut. I was the eldest.

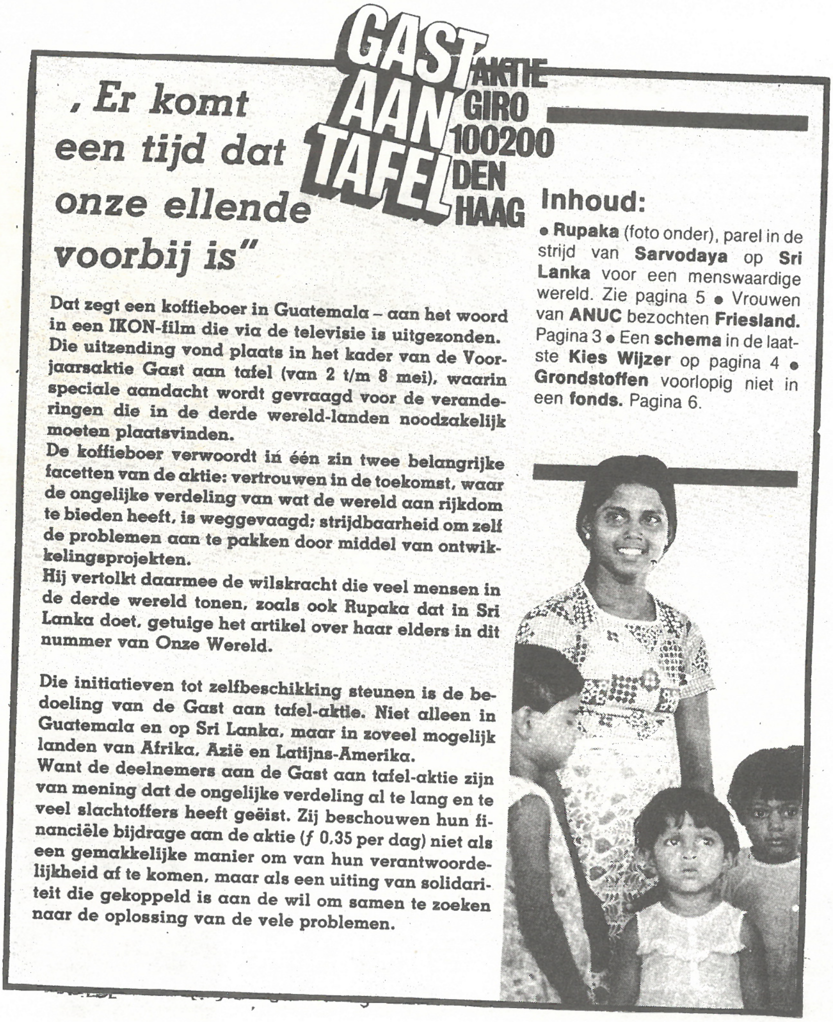
I got through my G.C.E. (O level) in 1970 and qualified for the ALs. My principal was Mrs. Chitra Wijegoonewardene. She established many societies to initiate us in social work. One of these was the Sarvodaya Society. She got us to participate in Sarvodaya camps and a Sarvodaya farm was put up in our school premises. After I sat for A.L.s on May 2, 1973 my principal directed me to Meth Medura Sarvodaya headquarters. There I underwent training in pre-school teaching and community leadership, while undergoing unprecedented experiences. The life-training, I received here was even more remarkable. There were about 26 participants from all over the island. There were several other courses, but we all lived together as members of one family. Up at 5.00 a.m., till we went to bed at 10.00 p.m., we were always working - indulging in work that led to our personality development always. I mostly value the participation in Shramadana Camps held in different parts of the country. Especially, the experiences I underwent in Kurunegala, Thanamalvila and Jaffna camps, I will never forget. At the end of December 1975 after the course, I returned to my village fraught with much hope. I looked for a place to start a pre-school but no one gave me land. Maybe giving was not in their nature. Then I went to meet my former school head. She met the Chief Incumbent of Ovitigala temple who agreed to give some space in the temple. I first, collected 6 students, which number escalated to 40 later. This made the Bhikku allot me a separate place, to which I had to walk 2 1/2 miles . Then I began a Singithi Havula (Kids' Corner). In 1974 August, Sarvodaya work commenced in our village. On August 16, 17 and 18 under the leadership of Mr. R. A. Wijegoonewardena and Sarvodaya co-ordinator P. C. Liyanage, a road was constructed to our village. A vast labour force comprising Sarvodaya personnel, school children, police officers and other society workers worked on this assignment. I handed over my pre-school to a sister named Chandra Hettiarachchi and on October 28, 1974 began the Galleniya Kande pre-school. Begun in a temporary shed, on November 5th 1975, it was re-opened in a new building by our leader himself. This pre-school was in a very beautiful landscape.

Thus by forging the unity of the villagers and gaining their love and affection, I did my work. My leader repaid my work by letting me go on a tour to Netherlands in 1976. I had been selected as a participant in the programme, 'Guest at your table' staged in Netherlands in April 30, 1976 . Others who went were Mr. P.A. Kiriwandeniya, Kirthi malli of Mathiyagoda village and Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram, Head of the Central Bank then.

All expenses were borne by Sarvodaya and NOVIB for this 2 weeks conference, where we met reps from distant other countries including Morocco and Somalia. We could arrange our own programmes too. There was a special programme on pre-schools and translators provided.

I was afforded a view of Sarvodaya Movement action here. The Belgium and Netherland Sarvodaya workers welcomed us cheerfully. They collected funds to develop our villages. I had read only in books about snow-swathed countries. Now I actually saw them. Netherlands is like a garden in full bloom. It was not gifted with natural splendour like ours, but human enterprise had filled the void. The Dutch are a very industrious people. We further visited their University, milk producing centres, farms and a fishery harbour.

They promised to visit our village. True to their word, they did so and even helped our pre-school.



GAST AAN TAFEL

AKTIE
GIRO
100200
DEN
HAAG

„Er komt een tijd dat onze ellende voorbij is"

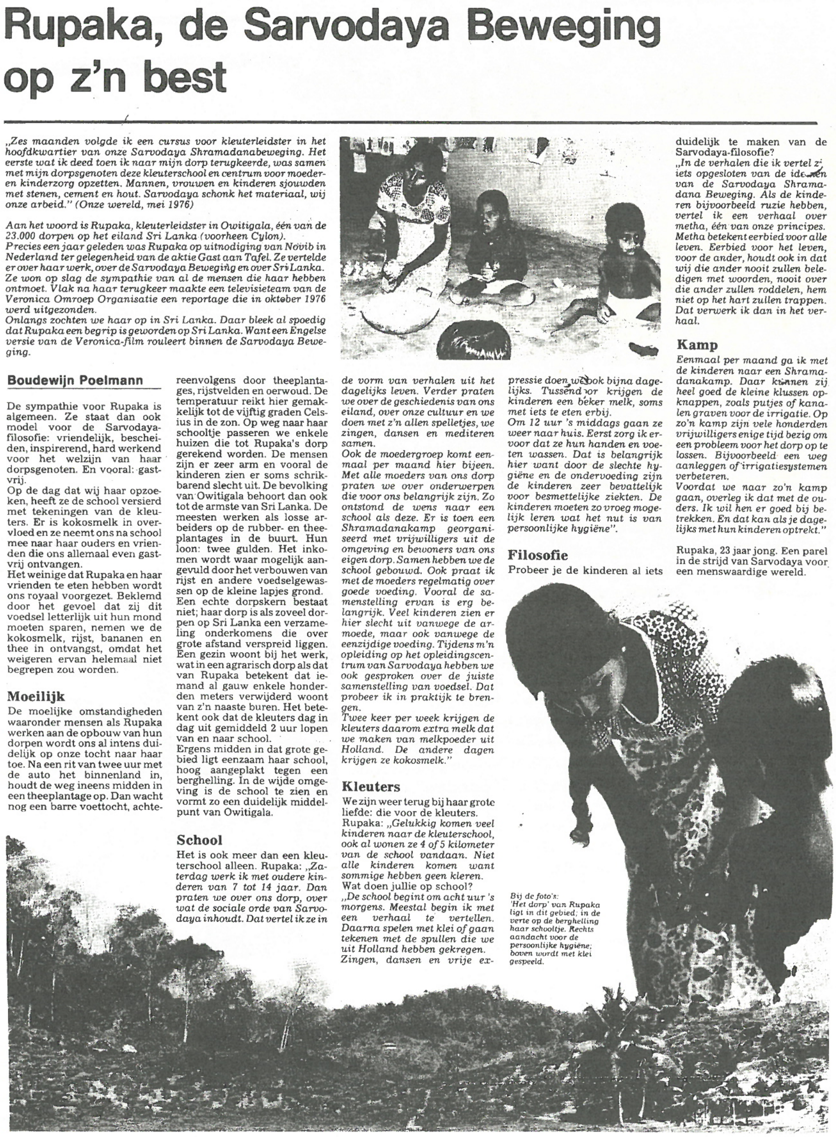
Dat zegt een koffieboer in Guatemala – aan het woord in een IKON-film die via de televisie is uitgezonden. Die uitzending vond plaats in het kader van de Voorjaarsaktie Gast aan tafel (van 2 t/m 8 mei), waarin speciale aandacht wordt gevraagd voor de veranderingen die in de derde wereld-landen noodzakelijk moeten plaatsvinden.
De koffieboer verwoordt in één zin twee belangrijke facetten van de aktie: vertrouwen in de toekomst, waar de ongelijke verdeling van wat de wereld aan rijkdom te bieden heeft, is weggevaagd; strijdbaarheid om zelf de problemen aan te pakken door middel van ontwikkelingsprojekten.
Hij vertolkt daarmee de wilskracht die veel mensen in de derde wereld tonen, zoals ook Rupaka dat in Sri Lanka doet, getuige het artikel over haar elders in dit nummer van Onze Wereld.

Die initiatieven tot zelfbeschikking steunen is de bedoeling van de Gast aan tafel-aktie. Niet alleen in Guatemala en op Sri Lanka, maar in zoveel mogelijk landen van Afrika, Azië en Latijns-Amerika.
Want de deelnemers aan de Gast aan tafel-aktie zijn van mening dat de ongelijke verdeling al te lang en te veel slachtoffers heeft geëist. Zij beschouwen hun financiële bijdrage aan de aktie (*f* 0,35 per dag) niet als een gemakkelijke manier om van hun verantwoordelijkheid af te komen, maar als een uiting van solidariteit die gekoppeld is aan de wil om samen te zoeken naar de oplossing van de vele problemen.

Inhoud:

● **Rupaka** (foto onder), parel in de strijd van **Sarvodaya** op **Sri Lanka** voor een menswaardige wereld. Zie pagina 5 ● Vrouwen van **ANUC** bezochten **Friesland.** Pagina 3 ● Een **schema** in de laatste **Kies Wijzer** op pagina 4 ● **Grondstoffen** voorlopig niet in een **fonds.** Pagina 6.

Photo 110 - From a newspaper report on Rupa Nangi



Rupaka, de Sarvodaya Beweging op z'n best

„Zes maanden volgde ik een cursus voor kleuterleidster in het hoofdkwartier van onze Sarvodaya Shramadanabeweging. Het eerste wat ik deed toen ik naar mijn dorp terugkeerde, was samen met mijn dorpsgenoten deze kleuterschool en centrum voor moeder- en kinderzorg opzetten. Mannen, vrouwen en kinderen sjouwden met stenen, cement en hout. Sarvodaya schonk het materiaal, wij onze arbeid." (Onze wereld, mei 1976)

Aan het woord is Rupaka, kleuterleidster in Owitigala, één van de 23.000 dorpen op het eiland Sri Lanka (voorheen Cylon).
Precies een jaar geleden was Rupaka op uitnodiging van Novib in Nederland ter gelegenheid van de aktie Gast aan Tafel. Ze vertelde er over haar werk, over de Sarvodaya Beweging en over Sri Lanka. Ze won op slag de sympathie van al de mensen die haar hebben ontmoet. Vlak na haar terugkeer maakte een televisieteam van de Veronica Omroep Organisatie een reportage die in oktober 1976 werd uitgezonden.
Onlangs zochten we haar op in Sri Lanka. Daar bleek al spoedig dat Rupaka een begrip is geworden op Sri Lanka. Want een Engelse versie van de Veronica-film rouleert binnen de Sarvodaya Beweging.

Boudewijn Poelmann

De sympathie voor Rupaka is algemeen. Ze staat dan ook model voor de Sarvodaya-filosofie: vriendelijk, bescheiden, inspirerend, hard werkend voor het welzijn van haar dorpsgenoten. En vooral: gastvrij.
Op de dag dat wij haar opzoeken, heeft ze de school versierd met tekeningen van de kleuters. Er is kokosmelk in overvloed en ze neemt ons na school mee naar haar ouders en vrienden die ons allemaal even gastvrij ontvangen.
Het weinige dat Rupaka en haar vrienden te eten hebben wordt ons royaal voorgezet. Beklemd door het gevoel dat zij dit voedsel letterlijk uit hun mond moeten sparen, nemen we de kokosmelk, rijst, bananen en thee in ontvangst, omdat het weigeren ervan helemaal niet begrepen zou worden.

Moeilijk

De moeilijke omstandigheden waaronder mensen als Rupaka werken aan de opbouw van hun dorpen wordt ons al intens duidelijk op onze tocht naar haar toe. Na een rit van twee uur met de auto het binnenland in, houdt de weg ineens midden in een theeplantage op. Dan wacht nog een barre voettocht, achtereenvolgens door theeplantages, rijstvelden en oerwoud. De temperatuur reikt hier gemakkelijk tot de vijftig graden Celsius in de zon. Op weg naar haar schooltje passeren we enkele huizen die tot Rupaka's dorp gerekend worden. De mensen zijn er zeer arm en vooral de kinderen zien er soms schrikbarend slecht uit. De bevolking van Owitigala behoort dan ook tot de armste van Sri Lanka. De meesten werken als losse arbeiders op de rubber- en theeplantages in de buurt. Hun loon: twee gulden. Het inkomen wordt waar mogelijk aangevuld door het verbouwen van rijst en andere voedselgewassen op de kleine lapjes grond.
Een echte dorpskern bestaat niet; haar dorp is als zoveel dorpen op Sri Lanka een verzameling onderkomens die over grote afstand verspreid liggen. Een gezin woont bij het werk, wat in een agrarisch dorp als dat van Rupaka betekent dat iemand al gauw enkele honderden meters verwijderd woont van z'n naaste buren. Het betekent ook dat de kleuters dag in dag uit gemiddeld 2 uur lopen van en naar school.
Ergens midden in dat grote gebied ligt eenzaam haar school, hoog aangeplakt tegen een berghelling. In de wijde omgeving is de school te zien en vormt zo een duidelijk middelpunt van Owitigala.

School

Het is ook meer dan een kleuterschool alleen. Rupaka: *„Zaterdag werk ik met oudere kinderen van 7 tot 14 jaar. Dan praten we over ons dorp, over wat de sociale orde van Sarvodaya inhoudt. Dat vertel ik ze in de vorm van verhalen uit het dagelijks leven. Verder praten we over de geschiedenis van ons eiland, over onze cultuur en we doen met z'n allen spelletjes, we zingen, dansen en mediteren samen.*
Ook de moedergroep komt eenmaal per maand hier bijeen. Met alle moeders van ons dorp praten we over onderwerpen die voor ons belangrijk zijn. Zo ontstond de wens naar een school als deze. Er is toen een Shramadanakamp georganiseerd met vrijwilligers uit de omgeving en bewoners van ons eigen dorp. Samen hebben we de school gebouwd. Ook praat ik met de moeders regelmatig over goede voeding. Vooral de samenstelling ervan is erg belangrijk. Veel kinderen zien er hier slecht uit vanwege de armoede, maar ook vanwege de eenzijdige voeding. Tijdens m'n opleiding op het opleidingscentrum van Sarvodaya hebben we ook gesproken over de juiste samenstelling van voedsel. Dat probeer ik in praktijk te brengen.
Twee keer per week krijgen de kleuters daarom extra melk dat we maken van melkpoeder uit Holland. De andere dagen krijgen ze kokosmelk."

Kleuters

We zijn weer terug bij haar grote liefde: die voor de kleuters.
Rupaka: *„Gelukkig komen veel kinderen naar de kleuterschool, ook al wonen ze 4 of 5 kilometer van de school vandaan. Niet alle kinderen komen want sommige hebben geen kleren.*
Wat doen jullie op school?
„De school begint om acht uur 's morgens. Meestal begin ik met een verhaal te vertellen. Daarna spelen met klei of gaan tekenen met de spullen die we uit Holland hebben gekregen. Zingen, dansen en vrije expressie doen we ook bijna dagelijks. Tussendoor krijgen de kinderen een beker melk, soms met iets te eten erbij.
Om 12 uur 's middags gaan ze weer naar huis. Eerst zorg ik ervoor dat ze hun handen en voeten wassen. Dat is belangrijk hier want door de slechte hygiëne en de ondervoeding zijn de kinderen zeer bevattelijk voor besmettelijke ziekten. De kinderen moeten zo vroeg mogelijk leren wat het nut is van persoonlijke hygiëne".

Filosofie

Probeer je de kinderen al iets duidelijk te maken van de Sarvodaya-filosofie?
„In de verhalen die ik vertel zit iets opgesloten van de ideeën van de Sarvodaya Shramadana Beweging. Als de kinderen bijvoorbeeld ruzie hebben, vertel ik een verhaal over metha, één van onze principes. Metha betekent eerbied voor alle leven. Eerbied voor het leven, voor de ander, houdt ook in dat wij die ander nooit zullen beledigen met woorden, nooit over die ander zullen roddelen, hem niet op het hart zullen trappen. Dat verwerk ik dan in het verhaal.

Kamp

Eenmaal per maand ga ik met de kinderen naar een Shramadanakamp. Daar kunnen zij heel goed de kleine klussen opknappen, zoals putjes of kanalen graven voor de irrigatie. Op zo'n kamp zijn vele honderden vrijwilligers enige tijd bezig om een probleem voor het dorp op te lossen. Bijvoorbeeld een weg aanleggen of irrigatiesystemen verbeteren.
Voordat we naar zo'n kamp gaan, overleg ik dat met de ouders. Ik wil hen er goed bij betrekken. En dat kan als je dagelijks met hun kinderen optrekt."

Rupaka, 23 jaar jong. Een parel in de strijd van Sarvodaya voor een menswaardige wereld.

Bij de foto's:
'Het dorp' van Rupaka ligt in dit gebied; in de verte op de berghelling haar schooltje. Rechts aandacht voor de persoonlijke hygiëne; boven wordt met klei gespeeld.

Photo 110 .1 - From a newspaper report on Rupa Nangi

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ASPBAE

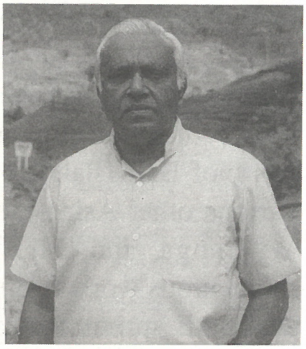

Photo 111 -
Prof. W.M.K. Wijetunga

ASPBAE is the acronym for Asian - South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education started in 1964 in Sydney, Australia, with the objective of improving adult education in Asian and Pacific regions. It worked in collaboration with UNESCO and the International Association for Adult Education.

In 1975, an ASPBAE Conference was held in the SLFI, Sri Lanka. It was organised by the University of Sri Lanka, Education Ministry and Sri Lanka Association for Total Education (SLATE). SLATE was born due to my endeavours. Its maiden meeting was held in Damsak Mandira and its first Chairmen were Mr. Dharmasena Arampatta and Mr. M. A.Tilakeratne. In the later ASPBAE meeting Prof V. K. Samaranayake, Mr. W. A. Jayawardene, Mr. W.M.K. Wijetunga and Mr. A.D. Gunewardene, Colombo DE took part.

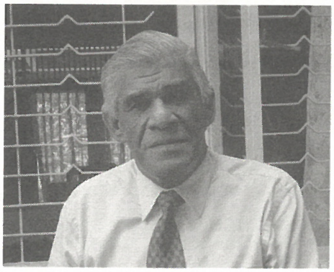

Photo 112 -
Prof. V.K.Samaranayake

In 1978 the first regional office was established in Colombo and I was selected Chairman and Prof.Wijetunga as Secretary while Mr. W.A. Jayawardena too played a major role. On Prof. Adishesheiya's request, I had to officiate as the Chairman of the first region of ASPBAE and alternate Chairman of ASPBAE and also as a member of the Executive Council. Though I held these posts, I let the academics like Prof. Wijetunga to actually do the work while I concentrated on my Sarvodaya, but always I kept close association with them due to my posts.

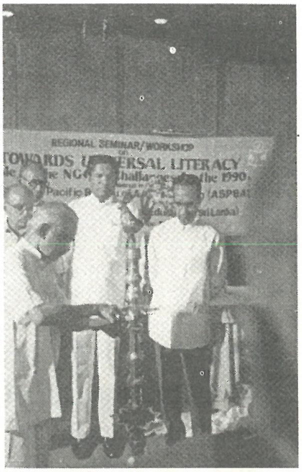
Photo 113 -
At the ASPBAE Conference
opened by
Mr. Lalth Athulathmudali

In 1976, Dr. Chris Duke took on the post of Secretary-General of ASPBAE. In 1985 Prof. W.M.K Wijetunga succeeded to this post and Mr. W.A. Jayawardene became the Asian Secretary. I worked continously as President and participated in the many conferences held in Dan Pasar of Bali Islands of Indonesia and in various other Asian cities. At home Prof, Wijetunga and Mr. Jayawardene did momentous work through this organisation. In 1985 Assembly of ASPBAE sprouted a rather volatile situation and the way I had handled the situation earned praise. I undertook drafting a new Constitution and the fact that an Asian became its first Secretary-General at the Delhi meeting was a significant event. Under the new Constitution formed in 1987, Lim Hoy Pik, a Singaporean was elected President. When I received the Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 1989. Prof. Wijetunga's and W.A. Jayawardene's attendance at the Bombay meeting pleased us much.

While I took part in the World Conferences held in Singapore, Thailand, Philippines etc., Prof. Wijetunga and Mr. Jayawardene as Executive members went on working enlivening Sarvodaya. We owe much to Prof. Wijetunga for the various academic publications that were put out on Sarvodaya in 1981, 1985, 1987 and 1990.

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Ananda Jayawardena

Photo 114 -
Mr. Ananda Jayawardena

During our participation in ASPBAE meetings, it almost became a habit of Ananda Jayawardena and me to hold discussions on various subjects and even personal matters. Mr. Jayawardena gave priority to interesting personal experiences of his. I was so much impressed by them that I requested him to write his memories. I wonder whether he did it. But here I would relate some of the most interesting narratives of his.

When Mr. Ananda Jayawardena was doing his MA degree, he lodged in a house at Thimbirigasyaya. On his way to the Colombo University along Havelock Road, he used to visit Nissanka Wijeratne and Tissa Wijeratne, two campus colleagues of him then residing at Vajira Road. Here sometimes he met their father Mr. E.A.P. Wijeratne (late Sir Edwin Wijeratne) who was the Minister of Home affairs. Like Ananda, Edwin Wijeratne also exhibited a keen interest in history and archaeology. All three Wijeratnes, father and sons were very fond of Ananda Jayawardena. One day while returning to his lodgings he had arrived at the Wijeratne household. First to meet was Mr. Edwin Wijeratne, to whom Ananda had informed that his MA course ended that day.

"Good news. Now what are you going to do?" he had asked.

“A job”.

“A job?”

"Yes, Sir"

"What sort of a job?"

"A job fitting my qualifications, also one in which I can serve the country and the nation."

"I think I can help you. Do you like to work as my private secretary?"

That just amazed young Jayawardena and also pleased him.

"Ananda, I think this is a good beginning as it would be a valve through which you can serve the country and nation."

"I like the job, Sir," answered the youth, joy bubbling within him.

"Then from tomorrow you start working. Come here and you can go with me in my car."

That was how Ananda Jayawardena ended up as Mr. Wijeratne's Private Secretary. But the job was short-lived as Mr. Wijeratne got an appointment as the High Commissioner in Britain. Oliver Gunetilake stepped into the shoes of Mr. Wijeratne. Now Ananda was under the impression that a new Secretary will come in, but when Sir Oliver Gunatilake met Mr. Jayawardena for the first time in the Cabinet office without any ado he had given the Cabinet files to Ananda and asked him to bring them along to his office next evening. For several days Ananda was working for Sir Oliver. One day he suddenly turned to him asked, 'By the way what is your name, man?' After Ananda replied he inquired from Sir Oliver when his new private secretary was coming? 'Why you are my private secretary'. Now the Secretaryship of Ananda to the new Minister was confirmed. But soon another crisis rose.

Mr. Jayawardena sometime back had seen the Assistant Registrar Post of the University of Ceylon gazetted and had sent in an application and even attended an interview. But since nothing had been heard, he had lost all interest in it and was silent. But now he got a letter informing that he had been appointed to the post and requesting him to come over. He liked the University environment but how he was to inform the Minister troubled him. Now the problem within him, he went to office and Sir Oliver himself came to his room to discuss some issue. Then later, he had revealed “Ananda, some problem seems to trouble you. You can talk about it with me.”

Now seizing his chance, he had explained the issue to which Sir Oliver had listened with a smile. Then he himself had made inquiries and summoned Ananda and told him that both Assistant Registrars of the University were about to retire and so the Registrar’s post too could be his soon and asked him to take on the Assistant Registrar's post.

All of Sir Oliver's predictions came true. Mr. Ananda Jayawardena took on the post. Sir Ivor Jennings had been the Chancellor, but was soon succeeded by Sir Nicholas Atygalle who too developed a paternal attitude to Ananda.

Now Ananda was about to tie his nuptial knot too. Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike the then Prime Minister was to attest as witness on behalf of the bride's party. Now Ananda was in a quandary whether he should choose as witness Sir Nicholas Atygalle his present boss, or Sir Oliver his previous boss. But soon Sir Oliver himself solved it for him due to his generosity and advice. When handing over the wedding cards Ananda Jayawardena had invited him to sign as witness when Sir Oliver had told him to devolve the duty on his present boss promising to attend the function. By this time Sir Oliver was Governor and he came very punctually for the celebrations dressed in the uniform of Sri Lanka's Governor. Soon news were heard that a Paliamentary issue would delay the arrival of Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and that perturbed Ananda who was again soothed by Oliver's words.

“Ananda don't get flustered. This is your day. I will wait here till he turns up.”

Even today Ananda Jayawardena has a big respect for Sir Oliver Gunatilleke. The final episode of this chapter would be an isue that arose between Vice-Chanceller Atygalle and our Ananda, the Registrar.

One day Ananda was working in his office when the Vice-Chancellor had given a ring and summoned him. Since such summons were frequent he delayed a bit but when he went in even the registrar had come. Now a file was handed over to him and a query put as to his ideas on its contents. Now Ananda frankly gave his ideas that seemed to have offended the Vice-Chanceller. He had blared out "Both of you!" in anger and thrown away the file. (His anger had been, as later known is, due to the fact that the Asst Registrar had given the same response as the Registrar to the contents of the file) Anyway Ananda had picked the file from the ground, left it on the table and gone away.

Nothing further happened on the issue. But that evening at about 5.00 p.m. he received a call at home from the Vice-Chancellor.

"What are you planning to do in the evening?"

"Nothing special, Sir."

"Alright, get ready and wait. I want to drive you somewhere."

So when the Vice-Chancellor's car came he got in and the Vice-Chancellor conversed with him on a very relaxed mood without any mention of the unsavoury event in the morning. They drove to Gampola and on the return invited him to see a film. Then he took him to dinner at his own residence and had driven him home. Actually, that day it had not been a boss-junior relation but an affectionate relationship between two friends.

Next day, when he went to office, the Vice-Chancellor had invited him to act as he pleased with regard to the contents in the file.

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Does giving Pancha Seela belong to politics?

When Mrs. Sirimavo was stripped of her civil rights, she held a Pooja at Kataragama. As she was returning via Ratnapura a public meeting was held at Ratnapura to receive her. Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanaseeha Thero too had attended the meeting.

At this time this Venerable had taken leave of politics and had joined Sarvodaya, begun the Pathakade Bhikku Training Institute and handed that too to us and was interested in general social service activities. Actually, when J.R. Jayewardene was State Minister he had imprisoned our Thera on concocted charges. After his release, he worked for the come back of Mrs. Bandaranaike, then left politics and joined our Movement.

A week prior to the UNP coming to power in 1977, a group of UNPers including Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Athulathmudali had visited Sarvodaya and since I was abroad, had been received by Mr. Karunananda and Ven Gnanaseeha Thero and others.

Photo 115 -
The joyful meeting of President J.R.Jeyewardene and Henpitagedera Nayaka Thero

As Mr. J.R. Jayewardene set eyes on the Thero he had made obeisance to him and reminded of the past had joked "You know what I had been upto". Then the Thero had held Jayewardene's hand and said "You too know what I was upto at the last elections." In the 1970 elections many anti-UNP meetings were chaired by the Thero. Then he told me that he will leave the nuisansical politics and join Sarvodaya and now he was out of politics.

However, somebody had alerted JR about the prelate's attendance at the Ratnapura meeting. So now I was summoned to Ward Place and the following conversation ensued.

"Ariyaratne, has Gnanaseeha again taken to politics?"

"You mean the Thero Gnanaseeha, Sir?"

"Yes, yes. Him. Is it correct for Sarvodaya members to induldge in politics?"

Just then I remembered that the Thero was in his ashram at Welikade. So I took the President's telephone excusing myself and spoke to the Thero thus.

"Venerable, the President is questioning me as to whether you are dabbling in politics again. Please clarify the position yourself to him."

I gave back the receiver to the President. Then JR addressed him under a camouflage of affection.

"How are you Venerable Thero? So you have taken to politics again?"

I could hear the Thero speak back through the phone, "Why do you say that?"

"I heard that you made a speech at the Ratnapura meeting"

I heard the Thero laugh out loud.

"Sir, I had been invited to deliver Pansil at the meeting held to receive Mrs. Sirimavo who had been Prime Minister several times in this country. So as a Bhikku, I did my duty. Does giving pansil belong to politics?"

"Alright, Venerable, that is all what I want to know."

"May you be well!" intoned the Thero.

Now the President remarked, "Ariyaratne, you are a cute man" laughed and asked me to leave.

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Mature political prowess

There is a temple behind the Wadduwa Police and that houses a Sarvodaya Shramadana Society too. A ceremony under auspices of the President had been arranged here to open a new Dhamma Saala. The Dayake Sabha cum Sarvodaya personnel invited me too for the function. I accepted it on the condition that I will not sit on the stage or make a speech. Deliberately, I avoided the procession in which the President and entourage were led to the stage. I sat in the front row avoiding the eyes of the Chief Guest, but I saw HE looking at me several times. I pretended not to notice it.

Now the ceremony was in full swing and the Chief Minister of Sabaragamuwa, Mr. Punchinilame came to me and said "President wishes you to come on to the stage."

"No, I cannot."

"Come, come" said the President motioning to me. I just could not resist that order done before an audience of about 3000. He got me to sit near him. His speech was excellent and capsuled the whole history of Buddhism. Not a word contrary to religion was uttered. Next spoke Mr. Punchinilame. He mentioned Mrs. Bandaranaike's name several times and made a political speech not fit to be made at a religious function. I told HE, that this speech is faulty. This is a temple. He should know it.

"Ariyaratne, you can make a counter speech." I just sat there looking down. Now the President took the mike and invited me to speak. I had no alternative. I praised HE's speech and criticised Mr. Punchinilame's speech. In the politest terms, I said that at a religious function like this to attack Mrs. Sirimavo who has done inmeasurable service to Buddha Sasana was unjustifiable.

As I was returning to my seat, I tapped Mr. Punchinilame and said "Punchi did you get angry with me?"

"I will talk of it later," he said smiling.

The function was over. We were at the tea party. Punchinilame called me aside and said, "Boss did a nice sermon. He had earlier instructed me to do a critical speech of Mrs. Sirimavo. Then he got you to criticize me. Lokka (boss) is very adept in this art. Just ignore."

And he burst out laughing.

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Elbiha - Borobudhur - Prasantran

This is the city of Jakarta. I am staying here at a moderately affluent hotel named Menteng. Lakshman Weerasooriya malli, who was a lawyer from Anuradhapura is here with me. It was in Netherlands that I suddenly decided to spend 10 days in Indonesia. Dr. Sjef Theunis, Secretary General of NOVIB had often spoken to me about Elbiha - a Legal Aid body established in 1971 by a famous lawyer named Adran Buyung Nasutiyong. He had also hinted at the affiliation of such a unit to Sarvodaya. Since, Sjef was coming to Jakarta last week, he said that I could go back to Lanka and then go to Jakarta. I did so and on April 21st was here at Jakarta.

I had never been here before and I was very keen to see one of our famous Buddhist shrines, Borobudhur. So I could fulfil these aspirations too.

We flew with "Garuda" Indonesian Airways on April 21st 1979. In 4 hours 10 minutes we were there. There is a time gap of 1 1/2 hours between Indonesia and our island. So at 4.00 p.m. we were there. Though the foliage was similar to Sri Lanka, Jakarta on first glance seemed just a valley.

Sjef and representatives from Elbiha as Mohammed Yahiya, Fowzi Abdullah and Aman Sali had come to the airport and we were put up in Menteng Hotel.

On April 26th we flew to Yog Jakarta with Sjef Theunis, a 40 minute flight. As we approached the Yog Jakarta the ocean on one side, and larvae mountains facing the sea create a magnificent landscape. Further rise a massive mountain mastiff. On its slope is ancient Borobudhur, a resplendent Buddhist shrine I longed to see.

Tall thin Ko Heneman an officer of NOVIB and his wife Jenin, tall and slim welcomed us and drove us in their Toyota Jeep to Sreenath Shanthi Hotel sited in the main street of Yog Jakarta. After depositing our bags in our rooms, we went for breakfast to their house. Their 3 month old son, Indra welcomed us with a smile. Jenin's parents had come all the way from Netherlands to see their grandchild.

Ko is a field officer working here for NOVIB. An ex-student of Twente University, he is a very clever electrical and technical Engineer. First we visited a Hindu kovil named Perambon, 12 metres away. Hewn out of granite in the 8th or 9th centuries, it is redolent of the arts and crafts of our Polonnaruwa period. A multitude of Buddha statues adorns the place. The Ramayana story engraved on the stone walls titilates the onlooker even after 1000 years. Never have I seen a work of art comparable to this arama.

Having returned from Yog Yo Me, we visited a Batik factory. About a 100 work in this well organised place. Production is of high quality but wages are 1/3 rd of our workers. On the 27th, we visited a technical institute built with 4,00,000 dollars. A 72 years old female is its director. Student number is 800. There are sections allotted to motor mechanism, welding etc., and a course runs to 3 years. After lunch we went to the airport with Sjef. He would fly to Jakarta and then to Netherlands, while we were to stay here for another 2 days.

Temple of Borobudhur

Two of us travelled direct to the Borobudhur shrine, sited 40 kilo metres from Yogya. The shrine sprawls right across a mountain. Even from a distance it evoked piety in me. What a small minority has the fortune to visit it!

We took a meal at Indra hotel at the foothills of the mountain and wending our way through fairs that sold trinkets etc., we came to the steps leading to the shrine. From here is seen a cluster of statues beautifully carved and also ruined monoliths. UNESCO is helping to renovate this ancient hallowed and gigantic shrine.

Now fulfilling a long standing wish within me, I climbed the steps of Borobudhur. All over here are manifest thousands of large and small stupas and thousands of large and small Buddha statues. Murals, carefully drawn, adorn the walls, depicting Jataka tales and the life of the Buddha. I had entered another world. For three hours I kept on climbing.

"How if the truthful religion can again be re-instated in this once Buddhist kingdom!" This thought reverberated within my mind through out the climb. I observed pansil here, meditated and wished it should happen.

I will pen a separate chapter on Borobudhur later. Two kilo metres this side of Borobudhur, is Meiden temple that houses the largest Buddha statue in Indonesia. It is simply incomparable. The feet are in a posture of a seated Buddha. Two other statues flank it but they could not be identified in the dark. In size and make, it is just like Pollonaruwa Gedige. Time context is the same. Seeing a small temple and Dhamma Sala we went thither and saw a young Bhikku seated with a dayaka before him. A Samanera sat by reading a book. This monk is the Asst. Secretary of the Theravada Sangha Sabha of Indonesia, named Pannavaso. He spoke in English softly. He said that Theravada Buddhism was brought to Indonesia in 1934 by Narada Thera and that he visited the country several times and would come again next week for Vesak. He informed us of a prophesy believed even by non-Buddhists that Indonesia would revert to Buddhism.

He gifted us a book on meditation and treated us to tea and took us to the Dhamma Saala. After observing Pansil and worshipping Buddha, he gifted me a small Buddha statue. I told him that if he sends some monks to Ceylon, I could train them at Sarvodaya and asked him to establish contacts with NOVIB and Mr. Ko.

It was this monk that Mr. Ko first met in Netherlands. The monk's very placid demeanour, I had a hankering would convert Ko and his party to Buddhism. Actually if the monks follow Buddha's teachings and be pensive, what a transformation can be orchestrated in society!

As night was approaching, we took leave of Ven. Pannavaso and drove to the village of Pabalon, along an untarred road. Our aim was to see 'Prasantran'. Adults and children waved at us and greeted us.

Prasantran

One Habeeb, a young teacher from this village off Muntilon city in Central Java had come to our country 2 years back and spent a few days at Sarvodaya. We went to meet him.

As we got down a cluster of buildings was visible. Adolescents played here and then there were a number of observers. They directed us to Habeeb's room. A youth wrote down our names and went inside and informed him of our arrival. Habeeb welcomed us heartily.

He told us that Sarvodaya motivated him to begin a spate of activities. He remembered words as Metta, Karuna, Muditha and Upekha and several other words of Buddhist terminology. He said he delivered several lectures using Sarvodaya literature. Our word 'Shestra' he had adapted to Sarthra (Shisya or student) and Prasantran he said means the "learning community". There are many education venues, "Prasantrans" in Indonesia.

Photo 116 -
On the occassion of the visit by Mr. M. Habeeb Versing to Sarvodaya in 1976

About 700 young men and 200 young women are residential in these and receive a 3 year practical training. No barriers exist between the village and school. Village is school, school in village. Students resided in homes and even study in fields, buses, fish tanks and work places. All work together, learn together. The 45 teachers get no fee. They teach religion 5 times a day. Different religions are taught. Adults with varied talents learn in the Prasantrans and aid it with cash and talents. Philanthrophists have put up new buildings. This was a learning democracy not a school. Everyone learns, Everyone teaches. Society is self-sufficient. Their first dictum is "Gothon Royona" or shramadana or helping others.

This Pabelon Prasantran was begun in 1810. The present head, Mameni Jaffar's progenitor started it. Gone into hibernation during the 2nd World war, it was revived in 1960 by Thiyoji. He still lives with his parents and family in a house before his office. Name Thiyoji itself means the chief priest. It is an Islamic teaching sect.

Thiyoji who had been working in a fish tank came in the pouring rain to see us and asked us to stay overnight. He wanted to come to Sarvodaya and study. He is 40 years old. We took farewell of him and returned to Yogya. I will write a separate chapter in Yogya.

On 28th I visited another Islamic education venue named Sisva. One Key Bhajan Devendra, a reputed educationalist had begun it in 1922 to counter the ill effects of the Dutch Education system. Today 'Sisva' is popular all over Indonesia. Born on May 2 ,1899 he died on April 26, 1959.

Up next morning, I observed Pansil and meditated. Then I remembered that it was April 29, the day my father died, 9 years ago, so I conferred merit on him.

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Jungle Dissanayake

Photo 117 -
Mr. Jungle Dissanayake

I met a number of old friends on the Indonesian tour. As I got a two-day leisure before leaving this country with Lakshman, I trekked along roads full of motor bicycles, scooter bicycles, tricycles, mini buses etc., when somebody tapped me on the shoulder. It was Mr. M. Rajan, a UNICEF representative in charge of the Primary Health Project in Indonesia. With him were M. Victor Solasala, a senior UNICEF officer and Mr. Hema Dassanayake. After dining at Rajan's house, the friendship between Rajan and me got entrenched.

Hema was a long-standing pal of mine. Today he is the Administrative Officer of the World Health Organisation in Jakarta. Both Hema and Anita have helped me much in my travels and they are a couple I am very fond of.

My last night in Indonesia was spent in Ambassador T.D.S.A. Dissanayake's house. To this dinner held for me he had invited the ambassadors of India, Rumania and Malaysia along with their wives. Dr. Sujatmoko too was there. He too was a friend of mine and was also a Magsaysay award winner, one time Indonesian delegate to UNO and had ended up as Vice Chancellor of the Peace University of UN in Tokyo. He had come with Chandra Zoysa to meet me at Sarvodaya.

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY

Photo 118 - Mr. Sujat Moko, Chancellor of UN University

Before the other guests arrived, I spent a long time talking with Mr. Dissanayake. He was an author and has written the life stories of Dudley Senanayake and J.R. Jayewardene. He gave me a copy of these, which I read that night itself. Educated at Royal College, Ceylon University and Harvard University and he then worked as a very efficient delegate to the UNO for 10 years. He possessed much knowledge and was very efficient, I felt that HE J.R. Jayewardene has done a big service by appointing such people as ambassadors.

Ambassador Dissanayake has also earned the pet name of Jungle Dissanayake. He is a well-built man and son of DIG, Mr. C.C Dissanayake whom he resembled. Having lived abroad for a number of years, he is almost frenzied with a love for his country and Buddhism, the major religion in our country. Born a Christian, he has done the biggest service in Indonesia to Buddhists. That was to plant a sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi at Borobudhur this Wesak and hold a Buddhist festival there. His deputy Mr. Abeyratne had given him the optimum aid. It was after I had enplaned in Boeing 774 of KLM to leave Jakarta for my country that the Ambassador left the airport.

Born in 1938, it is recently he had got married after my return from Indonesia. The wife was a girl guide my wife Neetha had known, herself being a girl guide. Jungle Dissanayake had entered the diplomatic service at 29 years and was the youngest Sri Lankan delegate to address the UN. Having zoomed to the

Ambassador post he worked in USA, Indonesia, Nepal, Burma, Nigeria, Egypt, Bangladesh and EEC. He had represented the country on behalf of the University and Sri Lanka at Asian and Olympic games and had written a book on cricket heroes of Sri Lanka. 'War and Peace' (3 volumes) written by him on modern Sri Lankan history is a graphic text. Today he is a full time writer.

Here I quote a message from the 3rd volume of his 'War and Peace' especially to show the affiliation between his thinking and our philosophy.

"A general weakness of our leaders was to focus attention on persons and parties.

My brother Sri Lankans,

Do not trust our politicians. They are more bent on their personal gain than on the common good. Do not plummet to mean levels by stooging to Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament. They are your servants, not your masters.

Politicians of Sri Lanka,

If you want blame me. Yet history will prove me correct."

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Peter Pabst

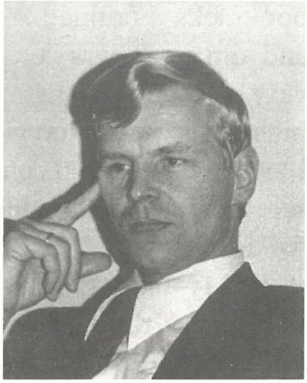

Photo 119 -
Mr. Peter Pabst

I dream rarely. But the rare dreams I have are special for two reasons. One is that they are rather confused; other is that they are of a prophetic nature especially regarding a friend or relative. Sometimes they lead to happy events, sometimes to unhappy events.

One example is recorded in one of my old diaries. According to it, I have seen a sequence of dreams, where I was spending a night in a luxury hotel in Jakarta, where I had gone to take part in a Elbiha Legal Service Seminar.

The first dream was as follows:

I was in my office at Damsak Mandira examining some documents. I saw that my left hand had darkened and was swollen. Then from a gaping hole in the hand a liquid oozes. It was not blood but a white liquid like milk. I got scared and came down. Neetha was down and I told her to phone Dr. Kodagoda and inquire if he is at home. Then I saw Siripala malli and told him to bring the car keys.

Now I woke. My heart beat fast. I switched on the table lamp and examined my hands. Nothing had happened. It had been a dream. I argued that loneliness and fear had generated the dream. I drank some water, walked about and again slept. It was past midnight.

Photo 120 -
Mr. Pabst (on left) with a German

My next dream was not that fearful but it did dishevel my mind and was connected to my office at Moratuwa. I had gone out and on coming back to office saw all the bookracks ruined and dirty. It was a very unpleasant night. The books too were discoloured and had a weathered look. I love my books and consider them as valuable as my life. So I just screamed deluded by the thought that some spirit was responsible for the chaos.

My third dream I saw towards dawn. It was the Galle Esplanade. Karunananda, Dharma Gunasinghe and I were watching a cricket match. Now Mr. Karunananda showed me his watch and said he has to go somewhere else. We all got out and walked towards our Jeep that had been halted at an open space by Galle Fort. We saw the jeep's bonnet open and we could not fathom how it happened. We walked faster to see the engine and the battery missing. Somebody had removed them.

I got up in the morning, arranged the bed, did my ablutions, meditated and jotted down my dreams. Just then I heard a knock on the door. Opening it I saw the handsome face of Lakshman, who had come to take part in the seminar with me. He handed me a telegram and I opened it immediately "Peter Pabst has died. Send a message of condolences. Heida's address is: .....– Neetha."

I was grief stricken. He was not only a fine co-worker but had become a family friend. Only 3 weeks earlier I had seen him, on April 8, 1979. Then he was being treated at Uniklink Hospital, Essen, in West Germany. I met him along with Susiri de Silva who lived there then and Tineke nangi and Mrs. Leela Jayasekera. Not knowing he was hospitalised we had gone to his house in Kortum Street at Darfield in West Germany. His wife Heida and the children were there and Heida told us that on Doctor's order Peter had been hospitalised. We visited him by car after a 2 1/2 hour journey.

I opened the doors of room No: 216 softly. There were two patients there and not recognizing either I closed the door. Then I heard a whistle and I identified it as Peter's whistle. I opened the door again and Peter was looking at us, but with a different withered face.

The attractive, ivory coloured, film star styled face was no more. Flesh in the face had dissolved and the bony frame stood out. The 35 old young Peter had turned to be an 80 years old man. I almost said 'Oh God' and I sat on the chair by him and held him by the left hand. The rest too now came in. He peered at them with swollen eyes, but did not speak, only smiled. Though the rest know Peter, I introduced them to him. But Peter was not in a state to speak. I felt he was running a temperature. He had known I was coming to Europe that day and he had told her in hospital, "Ari would visit me." Heida had told me this and I remembered it.

It is a pleasure to me that you visited me, he said with difficulty. I decided to talk to prevent him from talking. I reminded him of the immense work he did to eliminate poverty in my country. They are benefiting from it, I said adding that they all talk of him.

"Ari, my life cannot be saved. I am at the door of death. But I long to live till day after tomorrow to celebrate Good Friday with my family."

"I bless you and pray that your wish be fulfilled. You are a good Christian. Christ, your religious leader's perpetual plea was always help the others. You followed it to the letter. In your great service to our country you transcended all colour, religious and racial barriers. Never tried to convert others like some fanatics. You did all that for the sake of humanity. You used to join us in our Maithree Bhavana. Now think of all that."

Now the others left. Peter closed his eyes and let his mind concentrate. I held his hand and indulged in Maithree Bhavana and then released sentiments to bring back his health. I even wished the unhealthy forces in his body to flow into mine, and his temperature dropped and the face became more pleasant. He was temporarily cured. Peter was smiling with me. I told him "Retain your mental energy to the end bravely. Don't think of death. Till the last moment retain the mental energy. Retain maithree and love. You will be cured."

He listened to me affectionately. A nurse came in to tend to him. She said his fever is down and that he could go home on Good Friday.

"Peter, next time I come to Europe I will definitely come to see you." I bent down and kissed his face. That was the last time I saw him. Later I got to know from Heida the date and time he passed away. It was the exact time that liquid had oozed from my hand in my dreams. Peter had died of leukemia.

Peter's Life Story

I met Peter first at Heuss Academy, 20 miles away from Bonn in West Germany. This Academy was the training Institute of the Frederich Naumann Stiftung plus its conference hall. It was Mr. Wust who introduced Peter to me and said he would be the new representative to Sarvodaya. The year was 1972. I was then in Germany on an invitation of FNS to address a Labour Minister's Seminar on the topic "How the present political milieu is affected by historical factors." Mr. Chandra Zoysa and Wijedasa Mahawatte too were with us. Our Labour Minister M.P.De Z Siriwardene entered the hall a few minutes after my speech began. After the speech he embraced me and said that it was like listening to a speech by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and said he was proud of me. We became close friends after this. Now we will come back to Peter Pabst.

He was our first FNS delegate. Then he was about 28 years. Year 1972. He waved the green flag for Sarvodaya FNS union. A tall slim man of about 6 1/2 feet in height, he was a jovial person. Even while working he was jovial. Very adept as a driver too, he was never still. As he talked he used to get up from the chair, circle around, gesticulate and again sit. How could such an active giant of a man limit his span of life to a mere 35 years?

Peter came to our island with his wife and two daughters. Third daughter was born here and next one a son was born back in Germany. Heidi was not tall like Peter, but stout. Her face plump. They were very fond of each other. Even after they left us, every year they used to send a family photo. Peter's hobby was photography. He was very adept in it and owned all the equipment. In Colombo they lived at Barnes Place. We soon became family friends.

It was Peter who handled the construction of Pathakade Bhikku Training Centre building. It was a testimony to his efficiency that he completed the massive task methodically and at an expense of 10 lakhs. He motivated contractors, architects, furniture makers to be punctual and handed us the building very early. This Pathakade Institute that serves hundreds of clergy and through them, the public is a lasting tribute to Peter.

While he was here he used to do quaint things. One was to act in a Sinhala film 'Mangala' produced from a text written by T.B. Illangaratne. Till it was screened we were not aware of his role as he had done it out of working hours. He had acted the role of an estate proprietor speaking Sinhala perfectly and he showed much prowess as an actor too.

In 1974, when he left us we had a grand farewell party. Next he went as head of UN Voluntary Service to Iran, where it was discovered that he had developed leukemia. He returned home and began a private enterprise and sustained the family and built a house too.

Anyway the news of his death reached us at Jakarta. Let Peter Pabst, my dear friend attain Nibbana! Let us again meet!

I sent Heida a telegram expressing my condolences and a brief letter.

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My first Chinese Tour

The desire to tour the People's Republic of China gripped me during my student's days at Mahinda College i.e. in 1949. I had read about People's China, about the Chinese Revolution and the life of Mao tse-tung and had developed a devotion to this country. This devotion led me to contribute on article in English titled, “The Re-awakening Asia” to the magazine “Planet” around China’s progress. That was in 1951. Mr. Vinnie Vitharana, then a teacher there, edited the article. I focused on the Chinese pivotal role in re-awakening Asia after removing the shackles of imperialism.

Even in my youth, I had turned into an anti-imperialist, free thinker and revolutionary, loving People's China. The desire to travel in China and see its leaders almost frenzied me, but the desire materialized only 30 years later i.e. on October 14, 1980. By this time the Chinese leaders, I had admired, had not only left politics but life itself. But on my visit, I yet sniffed the scent of their activities.

It was in Switzerland that I was apprised of the invitation to visit China. I had just landed in Switzerland after a tour of Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands. A fax message from Sarvodaya informed the news. Through UN organisation, under the patronage of the Government of China 40 countries, I was informed had been invited to study the communes in China and I had been nominated from Sri Lanka. Later, I got to know that the invitation had been done by Dr.Wickrema Weerasooriya and President Jayawardene. I returned in October 13, 1980 and on the 14th flew to Beijing via Karachchi. Two nights I spent in

Karachchi and landed in Beijing on the 16th. Still I am on this tour, non-stop. A special memory rises in me.

I got a chance to tour China a long time back. Yet due to a narrow minded and selfish group labelled Socialist, I could not avail myself of the opportunity. The reason was that they were averse to my Buddhist oriented style of living focusing on building a non-exploitative society. Their desire was to super-impose on the peace loving Sri Lankans, a system born in Russia or China or some other country. There was no attention on our culture, our thoughts and our behaviour patterns. So they labelled me as an anti-progressive person. But it is almost ironical that under a capitalist regime, I was again allowed to visit China, but such things are not novel in my life. Yet I have only a disgust for those who labelled me a reactionary, especially due to the situation they are plummeted today.

"Do good unto others and it will come back to you" is all I can say.

In China, I saw a powerful regime that had gathered momentum for 31 years. On the 16th midnight as I approached Beijing airport the same joy I underwent when approaching Zurich flowed in me. Even the same material level was manifest on a high plane. Auto escalators, polished floors, walls as white as the white lotus, hall equipment as if presently purchased and hostesses like goddesses, young Chinese uniformed security officers alert to what is going around - all these I saw. Not a single officer conversed with us on the way. The first officer to speak with us was the health officer. He put a seal on our documents saying that facilities were available at every hospital if we fall ill.

The airport at that time was filled only with about 20 who had disembarked from our plane. The immigration officer also quickly sealed my form and handed it back. Then, a middle aged man came to me, addressed me by name, courtesied to me and held me by the hand. He said the Chinese government had sent him to fetch me. When my bag arrived, he said that diplomatic immunity makes it unnecessary to examine my bag and came out with me. Johnson and Abdulla Damar Bahari from Tanzania attending the same seminar were with me. Further there were

Mr. & Mrs. Navaratnaraja from our embassy, Mr. Paan C. Paan, Head of the agriculture Ministry of China and Mrs. Kui Yun, translator. Their friendly attitude dispelled the gloom I had initially felt. We put up the night in an airport hotel.

Next morning, we travelled by train from Beijing to Jen Jing. After a 2-hour drive, we met the rest of the crowd. "Ten" in China is for Paradise. "Jing" is habour. Since the Chinese emperor's visit across the river here, the city has been renamed Jen Jing, a city 130 kilometres from Beijing.

I observed that poverty was equally spread here. There weren't any well-dressed people. Both males and females wear long trousers and a collared coat. Blue is the popular colour. Army personnel are in green and in their collars are two red stripes and a red star in their caps.

In Beijing live 75 lakhs of people. Their vehicle is the bicycle. Twenty lakhs trek across the city daily. It is said the Changan Highway runs from East to West of China,wide enough for ten vehicles to drive abreast.

The Beijing man is said to have lived 5,00,000 years ago on the mountains to the South West of Beijing city. The city had begun as a village 4000 years ago and in the 11th century AD had transformed into a city, called Jing Jeng. From 5th century BC it had undergone many new changes. In the 1st century during Ming dynasty it came to be known as Beijing.

The old palaces are in the forbidden city, the historical nucleus of China. The square Tien Un is here. On its balcony Mao tse-tung had stood in October 1, 1949 and made the declaration of the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The Forbidden City today presents a new look. In its centre, is a huge memorial built of granite and marble which commemorates Chinese heroes. 'People's heroes are immortal,' a dictum of Mao tse-tung is engraved here.

Before the Heroes Memorial, people thronged. The 18 delegates from UNO including me were among them. We lined up in four, and queued to see Mao tse-tung's Memorial and corpse. School children, soldiers, ordinary citizens, and tourists all just trekked forward. After climbing the flight of steps, we removed our caps and doubling and getting into two rows again went forward. Before us on a chair about 8 feet high, sat Mao tse-tung, cross-legged. It was a pristine white statue. We passed it and went to another room. Mao tse-tung's corpse within it almost looks animate. No one even breathed before the great statesman. The Chinese flag was placed on his chest. The large memorial building had been constructed after his death on the party's decision. But when he was living it was he who had first signed the decree not to build statues. When PM Chou En Lai died, at his request, his ashes had been thrown into rivers.

Near Mao tse-tung's Memorial Hall is the Janatha or People's Hall. It encompasses a land area bigger than the Forbidden City area. Museum is on the right, focussing mainly on the different stages of the Chinese Revolution.

This historical square has been enlarged to 40 hectares to accommodate 1,000,000 people. All rallies from May 4, 1919 are held here. Thus the Forbidden City that had once sequestered royalty from the public allowing the former to satiate their sensuality is today undergoing acute transformation.

Like other cities of Chinese, Beijing too is an ocean of business. Through bicycles and pedestrians fast vehicles speed, and it even frightens me who usually drives about 100 miles an hour. From Beijing we went to Juan Guan, 70 kilometres north. It is an important post on the Great Wall of China and is sited in a montane area. The road reminds one of the 18 curves on the Kandy-Hasalaka road. From the vehicle itself was visible the Great Wall skirting the city over mountain tops. I remembered learning at school about the seven wonders of the World. I had seen other such wonders too as Taj Mahal of India, Empire State building of New York and Niagara Falls. We started climbing the Great Wall with other tourists. Our translator, Loi Loi nangi reminded us of Mao tse-tung's saying “If you cannot climb the Great Wall you are not a male.” In the same style that I climbed Sri Pada shivering in the cold, I climbed the Great Wall (300 yards up). From top after crowing that I am also a male, I could see the slopes below and the Great Wall winding its way 1600 kilometres.

Back we descended and came to Beijing and had lunch in the Summer Palace, which we toured after lunch. The Palace of the queen who died in 1908, sprawls over an area of 72 acres and is beautified by an artificial pond of 100 hectares. Palace is sited on a hilly slope and exhibits exquisite carvings. Skilled workers, one lakh in number and un-skilled workers, 10 lakhs in number had invested their labour for 14 years to build the palace, the tank and ground. From the lakh of people who went to the forest to cut the required wood, only 50,000 had returned.

A meal adequate to feed 5,000 people placed in 100 dishes, is always prepared for the queen. While lakhs of people died through hunger, she led a luxurious lazy life. On her birthday when she comes to this palace replicas of her depicting her as a goddess and other items were gifted to her by nobles. Now they are mere museum pieces. Lai Lai described these items to us almost sarcastically. Now the whole area is a mere tourist attraction drawing crowds.

We had dinner at Beijing Hotel. When we finally came to Tenjing it was midnight.

This is Canton city. We are in Thenhu hotel 20 kilo metres from the town and it is a lonely spot. It is a luxury hotel built after the revolution. When the Vice President Lin Piao comes here, he resides in this hotel. It is replete with amenities as the old palace. Even artificial forests have been created generating a very placid environment. The dormitories are huge. So are bathrooms and latrines. After Lin Piao's death, after the gang of four was over thrown, government seized this place. Now it is used as a stop over for special foreign guests.

On November 5 on which my birthday falls I am due to go to Hong Kong and from there back to my Country. I have not written everything in full, but hope to do later.

By the time we had visited the 8 communes of Sin Hu Kun, Shuvan Gang, Vong Huan, Heler, Ma Lu, Ho Lu, Liu Deu, Lu Vu Gang. We spent one day in each and studied them, getting up at 4.30 a.m.

Today is my 49th birthday. On hearing it, the group held a birthday party for me, after cutting a cake too. It was the birthday of Maria Enie Montenegro from Equador too and a cake was made for her too. We were showered with best wishes and we both made our vote of thanks. I made an amusing speech. Last birthday was spent in the house of Dr. Denis Goulet, of Notradame University in Indiana, America. His wife, Anne Maria and children Sitani and Andi too made a birthday cake for me that day.

People's China of an acreage of 96,000,000 acres is the world's third largest country. It is the most populated country boasting a population of 100 crores of 56 racial groups. Ninety four percent are Huis and six percent is comprised of the rest. Geographically it is vivid and very rich in natural resources. Out of the cultivable land 10 crores have already been farmed. This allots 0.13 hectares to each farmer. There are 12 crores of jungle land. Massive montane areas, valleys, grasslands, marshy lands, shores – all these add to the panorama. That is China.

At 7.00 we left the hotel and entrained at 8.30 and left People's China to Hong Kong. There is no time to record all my experiences, but I would do so later. One thing that I should mention is that though Mao had been successful in retrieving China from poverty, yet the society is engulfed in spiritual darkness. It is very likely that when the present progressive measures are executed it will be just another materially rich country. Earnestly wishing for a chance to infuse Sarvodaya philosophy and a Buddhist revival in China, I bid it adieu.

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Second International Conference

The first Sarvodaya International Conference was held in April 1978 at our Moratuwa Headquarters. The second was themed "Sarvodaya and World Development" The objective was to investigate how Sarvodaya concepts could apply to technological societies.

This seminar was held at Enschede in Netherlands and the venue was actually identified by Sarvodaya Twente on the initial idea of Susiri malli and Tineke nangi. Funds were supplied by NOVIB. Duration - from May 9th to 12th 1981.

Following countries participated - Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, USA, Canada, UK, China, British Guyana, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Costa Rica and Tanzania.

SARVODAYA AND WORLD
DEVELOPMENT
2nd International
Conference
Enschede Netherlands 1981 May 9th - 12th.

Photo 121- Mr Jack Jansen chairing second conference. Speaker is Mrs. Joana Macy

A speciality of this seminar was the awareness created among famous politicians cum social workers about activating this philosophy in 3000 - plus villages. During the 3 days an in-depth study was made as to the issues about what lessons Sarvodaya can impart to technological societies and how can they be executed. NOVIB funded all travel and organisation expenses while Enschede organized lodgings for members in friends houses. It was the first experience of Enschede in organizing such a large seminar.

I made the welcome speech. Here I expounded the replacement of the present trend of only material investment for progress, a European trend by a system of journeying from pauroshodaya (personality development) and Deshodaya (development of state) to Vishvodaya (development of World) by an amalgamation of the spiritual, ethical, cultural, social, economic and political aspects. Prof. Johan Galtung explained the vision of the theme. He was then in charge of the Peace Faculty of the UN University in Netherlands. Mr. Denis Goulet, Professor of Notredame University in Indiana, US, a noted philosopher and author made the next speech. He had spent about 3 months with us and put out a publication too. Next Detlef Kantowski, Professor of Sociology of Kontstanz University, Germany who also had a grilling of Sarvodaya at our headquarters made anoth-

DEVELOPMENT
2nd International
Conference

Photo 122 - Prof. Joana Macy and her group. On the left is Peter Kompado from Guyana

Photo 123 -
Exchanging ideas with participants at Seminar

er explanation of the theme. Other main participants were Prof. Osamu Muro of Towa University of Japan, Dr. Parameshwara Rao, a nuclear scientist of India, Mr. Thomas Berger, a famous Canadian Judge, Dr. George Macroby, who established the ITDG with Schumaker, Prof. Joana Macy, author of "Dhamma and Development" Professors W.M.K. Wijetunga and Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala along with Mr. Weeraman Jinadasa, P. Hewawitharana, William Kandage and T.S.de Silva, all the latter Sri Lankans.

Deputising Netherlands were Dr. Sjef Theunis, and Ton de Wilde. D. Wennermer Scherrer came from Germany. Ping Sing from China, Odmond Hollas from Norway and Jack Jansen from Belgium too attended.

The report of the seminar reinforced the acute interest enriched by the learned in the development of the world. The resource exchange among Sarvodaya affiliated countries, I feel was founded at the conference.

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Connection with CILCA and IRED

In the beginning of the 1980-decade, I invested much time in the rural development in Africa and South America. Two bodies worked with me i.e. CILCA presided by Prof. Ruth Morgenthau, Professor of Brande's University and IRED headed by Vincent Fernand.

Mrs. Ruth Morgenthau once worked as Deputy to Mr. Andrew Young who was the American Ambassador to the UN. When Mr. Andrew Young made the McDougall lecture at the FAO Conference in Geneva he elaborated on the Sri Lanka Sarvodaya and the Plan Pablo of Mexico presenting them as exemplary institutes. Prof. Ruth Morgenthau now pursuing this matter decided to link the two and established a unit named CILCA to counter famine in Africa and South America.

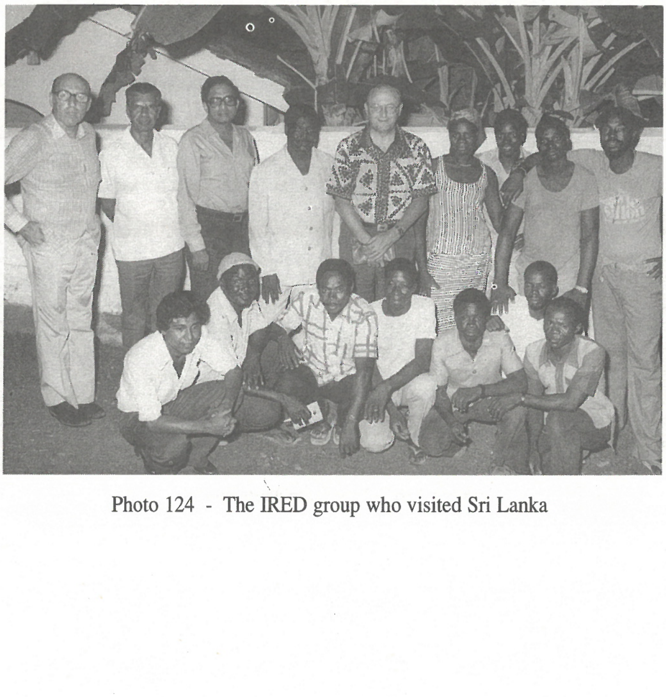

Photo 124 - The IRED group who visited Sri Lanka

She informed this to me by letter and invited us to attend the first CILCA Seminar in Mexico. Year was 1980. As I was too busy, I got Mr. Ton de Wilde, a Netherlander who worked with us to deputise. Later when I went to America, I discussed the project with her at her house in Boston and my wife too became a good friend of her and after this I always stayed at Ruth's house whenever I went to Boston. Her husband Henry and children too were very loving to me.

Photo 125 -
With Prof. Jimenis of Mexico

In 1981 the Executive Committee meeting of CILCA was successfully held at our headquarters. Mrs. Ruth Morgenthau, Prof. Jimenis, Director of Plan Pablo, Mexico, Mr Ali Cisi, a Minister of Mali and Head of its Central Bank who was appointed Executive Director of CILCA by us too attended this. Later CILCA meetings were held in Mali, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mexico, Netherlands and in the famous Bellagio, venue of Italy. We summoned many delegates from Mexico, Mali, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and many other African and Latin American provinces and states and explained Sarvodaya vision cum strategies to them.

Photo 126 - Mrs. Ruth Morgenthau

Photo 127 - Morgenthau family

In the meantime, IRED headed by Vincent Fernand summoned community leaders of Afriçan states and disseminated our experiences to them. Mr. Chandra Soysa was mainly active from our end in this.

At this time Brown University in Rhodes Islands where Ruth worked, founded the Allen Shaun Feinstein World Hunger Award to be given to those who did outstanding service to combat world hunger. In 1986, I won it. I took part in the ceremony held at Brown University with Neetha. Mrs. Ruth Morgenthau and Mr. Ali Cisi invited me to send on two Sarvodaya voluntary workers to Mali. While I was contemplating whom to send, I met a love frenzied couple who were about to marry.

Next Chapter is allotted to them.

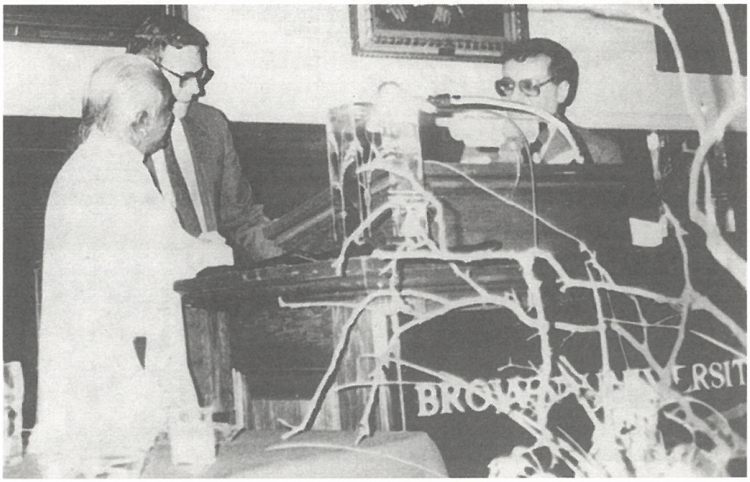

Photo 128 - Receiving the world Hunger Alleviation Award from Mr. Allen Shaun Feinstein

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Subasena and Anula who won titles from Mali

Anula is a damsel born in Ruwanwella in Kegalle district. Subasena malli is from Balapitiya. As school leavers they joined Sarvodaya and acted as voluntary workers in different parts of the country.

Anula is fair, fat, rather short. Subasena is dark, tall and well built. When I saw them, I felt that they were an ideal couple to be sent abroad.

"Why are you looking embarrassed? Have you developed a love affair?" I asked. Anula put her hands over her face while Subasena malli said, 'yes.'

Photo 129 -
The village gathering headed by Mr. Ali Cisi

"Very good. You match each other well. Isn't it?" I asked Neetha who acknowledged what I said. "Get married within one month. Inform any need of yours. Do you like to spend a two year honeymoon in Mali?" Mali is in West Africa.

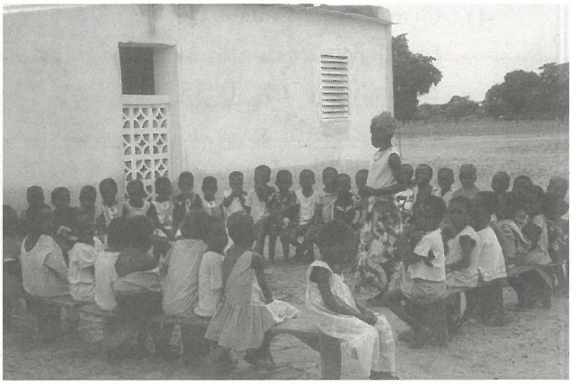

Photo 130 -
Kids' Gathering

They agreed. They had begun work in the villages in 1982-84 and went on to work in 10 villages, all Muslim villages, in Mali, West Africa. Irrespective of this factor they initiated many welfare and development schemes in these. Among them were:.

1) Provision of equipment, seeds and manure for agriculture,
2) Construction of a maternity clinic and rural dispensary,
3) A seeds bank,

Photo 131 -
Anula with rural women

4) Constructing wells for drinking water – wells were of 30-35 meter depth,
5) Homegarden scheme,
6) Savings schemes for women and children.

Photo 132 -
A cart in Mali

They were helped by Sarvodaya International, Cilca, Rockefeller Foundation, UNDP, and Agriculture and Village Development Ministry in Mali.

I took part in a meeting of the ruling body of Rockfeller Foundation at this time. This Foundation had been set up in 1898 on the guidance of Swami Vivekananda and I reminded them of it. They asked me what they could do in return. I told them to help Mali and thereby I got an aid of 35000 dollars for the CILCA Organisation which Anula and Subasena used for their work in Mali. The money was sent to Brandeis University from where the CILCA project was co-ordinated.

Meanwhile the Mali government had decided to confer the Chevalier Awards to both Anula and Subasena, equivalent to the Knighthoods in England, the highest state award in Mali. The ceremony was held at Grand Hotel in Bamako city on May 31,1984. Prof. Ruth Morgenthau, requested me to attend this function. I was in America at this time. Subasena malli had made the following record of this event.

“This function was held on May 31 at Grand Hotel in the capital city of Bamako in Mali under the auspices of the Vice President of Mali and Dr.A.T.Ariyaratne,the Sarvodaya leader.

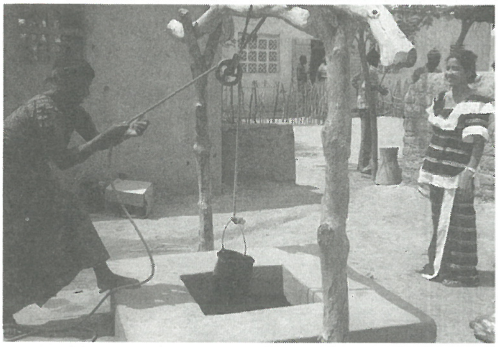

Photo 133 -
Anula nangi near a well in Mali

Photo 134 -
A scene from a Mali village

When we queried as to how we could work in Mali of whose mother tongue was Bambara and whose state language French we were unacquainted with, he said 'Look at those people with compassion, show them affection, talk with your heart. Now the language problem will thaw.' When our leader was about to leave to Mali from America Mrs. Morganthau had asked him, "What are you taking to Mali?" and he had replied "The rain". As he landed in Bamako he had informed Mr. Ali Cisi that he had brought rain to Mali. The temperature at this time in Mali was 38-40 centigrade. Two days later the political leaders of Pegu, Statesmen, army heads and a large crowd welcomed the Sarvodaya leader at the village we worked in and in his speech he again reiterated that he brought rain to Mali.The audience laughed and Mr. Ariyaratne relapsed into a Samadhi mood and as everybody watched wondering what was going to happen, he again came to them and said, " Now all of you pray for rain" and accordingly all imitating him raised their hands and prayed for rain. Just a few minutes passed and the rain came down in torrents surprising everybody.

Photo 135 -
The first Kohomba tree planted by us in Mali

Subasena malli was born on January 9,1955.

Anula nangi was born on May 23,1955. The youngest to win the Chevalier award were these two. They were only aged 27 years then. At present Subasena malli works as a Vice-President of Sarvodaya and also as a deputy Executive Director. Anula is at home now with her daughters, Unmali, Rasika and Sarala .The elder daughter they acquired after returning home fulfilling a promise made to me.

Photo 136 -
Children's centre of Mali

Photo 137 -
Touring Mali

Photo 138 -
Anula's house at Mali

Photo 139 -
Subasena, Mr. Ali Cisi, Anula and I at Mali

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A New Trail of Enlightenment

(Convocation address delivered by Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne President of the Sarvodaya Movement, at Sri Jayewardenepura University on 7.3.1981. At this convocation an honorary D. Litt. was also conferred on Mr. Ariyaratne)

Photo 140 -
Conferring a doctorate by Chancellor Dr. E.W. Adikaram

This evening I stand before you here having accepted a dual responsibility. Firsty, by conferring on me an honorary degree the Senate and the Council of University Sri Jayewardenepura have given me an academic recognition. Secondly, by inviting me to deliver the Convocation Address I have been given the opportunity to make by first contribution to the academic community of my country. I accept both these responsibilities with humility and with full awareness of my academic limitations. Being a past student of this University this is a moment of special joy for me and I express my sincere and grateful thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, the members of the Senate and the Council for their kindness.

It is not my intention to deliver a lengthy and scholarly convocation address. My academic status is only a few minutes old. Yet, I like to share with you some of my thoughts about the educational process and University Education in particular at this particular moment in the history of our country.

Sri Lanka like many other so called third word countries is entering an industrial era. On the other hand, the industrialized countries have entered a post-industrial era which they might in time to come name the Solar Age. In spite of the differences in consumption levels and production technologies, both these worlds are linked together in almost every respect be it in economic, political, or cultural relationships. In the modern world no country can be an island of its own. No longer can we have a world view or development paradigm exclusively for our own use. What ever we plan for ourselves will have to be done from the perspective of a new world order.

The old world order is crumbling down. The creation of material wealth for an endless portfolio of artificially created wants has been the predominant trend during the last several decades.

Use of renewable energy resources was replaced by an increasing use of non-renewable energy resources. The high energy consumption patterns of production, transportation, and consumption have brought humanity face to face with a dangerous situation unprecedented in the history of mankind. Realization is dawning on man that Nature does not provide him with boundless resources, and on the contrary he has to live within the bounds of Nature. It is on this realization that the future patterns of living, systems of production, distribution and consumption, and the content and processes of education have to be decided upon.

During the 18th century when Adam Smith wrote his 'Wealth of Nations' he was struck by the tremendous gain in productivity which resulted from the minute division and specialization of labour. This specialization has today reached very high levels in every field of human thought and activity including education.

I am not over-emphasizing when I say that even in the world of education we have reached over-specialization to the extent of over looking the fundamental integral unity within man himself and which has alienated him from other human beings, from the scientific and technological processes which are taking place around him, and from nature as a whole. No wonder that man is not at peace within himself, with his fellow-men and with his natural and institutionalised environment. The consequence of this type of fragmentation of the human personality is best seen in those societies which have reached the highest levels of science and technology. They have inherited a myriad of evils such as environmental pollution, ecological imbalances, diseases of affluence such as psychological disturbances, heart ailments and cancers, disintegration of families and an eternal threat of an accidental or premediated nuclear holocaust.

As a result of the historical forces operating in the last four centuries, we, in Sri Lanka were also brought into the orbit of this shaky world order. The industrialization processes which are introduced to our country also appear to be based on the same false foundations that placed the western nations on their present perilous plight. It seems to me therefore, that the most crucial challenge that our educational establishments and the university academic community in particular faces is the discovery of a paradigm of development that we should follow in this country.

Are we going to accept the western paradigm of growth centered development? Are we going to be led by endless materialistic greed rather than by well-thought out basic needs of our people? Are we going to adopt a high energy consuming technology for our production and consumption needs? Are we going to accept the economic theories based on a fragementary view of the so called classical factors of production which the western economists named land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship, without taking into consideration a totally different world view? Are we going to accept the present theories of employment divorced from what traditionally we accepted as Right Livelihood? In my opinion, these are the basic questions that our community as a whole, under the academic leadership of the Universities have to explore into. If we succeed we may open new and relevant realms of knowledge on which human survival would depend in the decades to come.

This brings me to draw your attention to the world view that we inherited from the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

I believe our education should be founded primarily on the understanding of man himself. My numerous contacts with University students and teachers in many other countries of the world have compelled me to come to the conclusion that the Personality Awakening of the human being should be given the foremost place at all levels of education. I very often equate the learning process to the awakening of insight in man symbolized by Lord Buddha's worlds *Chakkuṅ Udapādi* and acquisition of knowledge to *Nānaṅ Udapadi.* I consider these to be two stages preceding education which really should begin with *Paṅnā Udapādi* or awakening of wisdom. When wisdom is awakened man would look for the science of liberation from an unsatisfactory situation which may be symbolized by the Buddha's words of *Vijjā Udapādi.* The culmination of the processes of learning, knowledge, wisdom, and science is the final liberation from all darkness to light or *Alōkō Udapādi.* Can't we re-establish our foundations of education based on a goal oriented value substructure and a rational ideological framework of this nature?

An acceptance of such an educational philosophy will motivate us to begin the creation of an environment conducive to total human development from the very inception of human life in a mother's womb or at conception itself. The identification of the fact that human personality is a temporary coming together of mind - body (*Nāma-Rūpa*) combination, which can be further analyzed into the aggregates of sensation (*Vēdanā*) perception (*Saṅṅa*), volitional activities (*Sankhāra*), consciousness (*Viṅṅana*) and the four great elements of the qualities of hardness (Patavi), fluidity (*Āpō*), heat (*Thejō*) and motion (*Vāyō*) give us an excellent scientific foundation to begin an educational restructuring process.

The awakening of the human personality within this realistic basis and framework can take place continuously provided the various specialized disciplines in education, science and technology are reorganized to facilitate the provision of environmental and material needs. The release of processes for the satisfaction of these needs is the function of any sensible development planning and programming exercise. In other words, the philosophy and practice of education and development should merge at this ideological level as well as at the operational levels of technologies and structures in society. This is not happening today. We are all living in different worlds that we have created for ourselves on very convenient and narrow considerations for short term survival. What we need now for the new world order we have to create is a more stable vision which begins with ourselves but on an entirely different dimension.

We should without fear or hesitation reject the western paradigm of development because it has not led even those societies into happiness and contentment. The world simply does not have sufficient resources to provide all nations with the same consumption level such as those found in western societies. Neither can they themselves sustain it even for another decade. Let us reject this paradigm unceremoniously. 225 Million Americans are said to consume as much non-renewable energy as is sufficient for 200 billion individuals!

Then where does hope lie? I believe that hope lies in working out a development programme based on the real needs of our people that could be satisfied with our own available national resources including a science and technology which is our own and appropriate to our own realities. This cannot be realized unless we reject the economic science based on the four classical factors of production and we revert to our broader world outlook based on our own factors of progress, namely, Nature, the Total Human Personality, Social Capital and Knowledge. I believe that a theoretical framework of the art and science of combining these factors of progress should be worked out consciously by the academic community of our Universities. That is the real challenge that the Universities and other higher educational institutions face today.

You may think that this challenge is highly revolutionary and is sometimes not realizable in practice. If this is so, I plead with you to think of the consequences of accepting the present world order as it is. Project the present situation into the next couple of decades with all optimism, and the consequences you can deduce from that experience will be disastrous. On the other hand, I am not asking you to be pessimistic. I am only asking you to be realistic. We have all the potential in this country to build up a happy and contented society if we set before us a goal of balanced development within our resources and skills without being caught in the stream of irreversible western patterns of development which is intrinsically materialistic and violent.

To my knowledge there is no other country in the world besides Sri Lanka which can take the initiative in this most challenging task. As a nation we possess a dynamic world view with a long history behind it but which is most modern compared to the modern discoveries of science. We just launched upon the industrialization process but we can still change its direction and make it viable before it gathers a self-propelling momentum which would be difficult to check. The vast majority of our people are still a value-oriented community and they are amenable to sincere leadership and reason. What restraints us seems to be our reluctance to think anew and to act with courage.

May I conclude this brief address on a note of appeal to the teachers and students of this University. There is no more opportune and critical moment than now for a radically different intellectual breakthrough for the building up of a new world order. Please accept that challenge with courage and freshness of outlook and blaze a new trail of enlightenment for our nation and the world.

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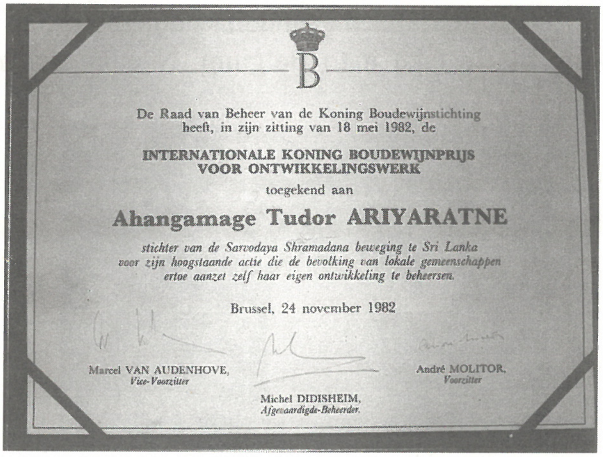
King Baudouin Award for International Development

I received the Magsaysay Award corresponding to the Nobel Prize in Asia, in August 1969. Thirteen years later the Chairman of the King Baudouin International Award informed me on November 1982 that I have been selected for the above award for International Development. A special Jury screens nominations sent from all countries before the final selection.

This award was split between two people at the first event. In 1980 the sharers were Prof. Paulo Freire, a famous educationalist of Brazil and Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank on behalf of the International Agriculture Committee. I was the first to receive "a non-split Baudouin Award."



B

De Raad van Beheer van de Koning Boudewijnstichting
heeft, in zijn zitting van 18 mei 1982, de

INTERNATIONALE KONING BOUDEWIJNPRIJS
VOOR ONTWIKKELINGSWERK

toegekend aan

Ahangamage Tudor ARIYARATNE

stichter van de Sarvodaya Shramadana beweging te Sri Lanka
voor zijn hoogstaande actie die de bevolking van lokale gemeenschappen
ertoe aanzet zelf haar eigen ontwikkeling te beheersen.

Brussel, 24 november 1982

Marcel VAN AUDENHOVE,
Vice-Voorzitter

Michel DIDISHEIM,
Afgevaardigde-Beheerder.

André MOLITOR,
Voorzitter

Photo 141 -
Award cerificates

Photo 142 -
Conferring award by King Baudouin

It was in1978 that this award was first installed. Born in 1930 Prince Baudouin succeeded King Leopold of Belgium in 1951. To commemorate 25 successful years of his governance this award was installed. Awarded once in two years it comprises a cash prize, a plaque and a certificate. When news spread that I was getting this award all Sarvodaya personnel and those near and dear to me were much pleased. President J.R. Jayewardene on the news invited Neetha and me to the President's House and felicitated us with a tea party.

This was followed by a Special Family Gathering at Damsak Mandira on November 20. Swami Premananda came all the way from Matale almost unexpectedly as a special guest. He blessed all of us, materialized a Buddha statue before us, gifted it to me asking me to take it to Belgium. Neetha and my eldest

Photo 143 -
Introducing those who accompanied us to the Royal couple of Belgium

King Baudouin Award Ceremony

Photo 144 (a.) -
Mr. Ton de Wilde with our delegation along with
Mr. Susiri De Silva & Tineke De Silva

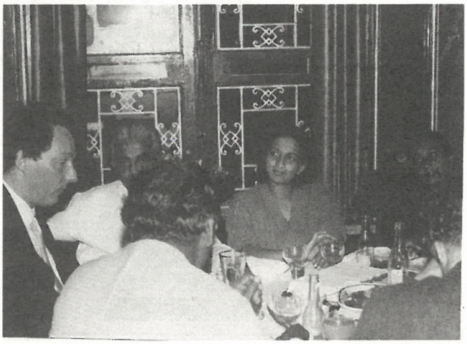


Photo 144 (b) -
At a party hosted by Dr. Sjef Theunis of Netherlands

Photo 144 (c) -
Mr.Gunadasa Liyanage preparing the live SLBC
Broadcast from Brussels

King Baudouin Award Ceremony

Photo 144 (d) -
With Mrs. D.A. De Silva

Photo 144 (e) -
With Sri Lankan Ambassador, Mr. D.A. De Silva

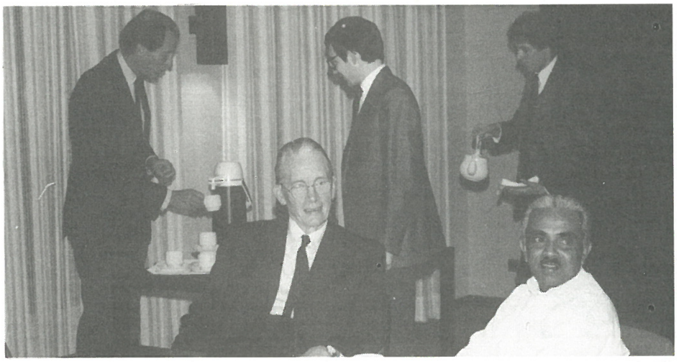


Photo 144 (f) -
With the President of the Baudouin Foundation
in his Office

daughter Charika and sons Vinya and Jeevan accompanied me to Belgium along with Mr. Thirunavukarasu, the Sarvodaya organiser of the North.

Photo 145 - At tea party at the President's House.In the photograph are: Mrs.Elena Jayewardene, Neetha and youngest daughter Nimna

We emplaned on November 21 and reached Brussels on the 22nd and were received by Belgium State officers with State honours. There were also the Sri Lanka Ambassador in Brussels, Mr. D. A. de Silva and his lady and delegates from the Belgian Sarvodaya Branch. We were put up in Astoria Hotel. On the 25th we were taken to the office of the King Baudouin Award Foundation sited before the Royal Palace. A large crowd of reporters, journalists, broadcasters and TV personnel was there. The President of the Foundation introduced me and I made a speech. I had to answer many questions put to me that were translated instantly to many languages as Flemish, Dutch, French, German and Spanish.

Photo 146 -
Swami Pemananda and
Mr. Dharma Gunasinghe at a
special family gathering at
Damsak Mandira

After lunch one hour before the ceremony I was summoned to a private discussion with the King. He arrived very punctually. A very humble king, he discussed with me mostly his spiritul experiences in Nepal and then we talked on meditation. Next we both relapsed into a meditation session on my suggestion.

By 4.00 p.m. the Hall was graced by the Prime Minister, Ministers, MPs, Ambassadors, distinguished invitees and journalists. Our group entered last but were given seats in the front row. As I entered everybody clapped and welcomed me. Then as we all stood up the

King and Queen Fabiola, Prince Albert, heir to the throne and his wife Princess Pavola made their advent to the Hall. I shook hands with each one of them.

The Belgium and Sri Lankan anthems were played next and the ceremony commenced. Mr. Auri Morito explained why I was chosen for this award. Then amidst loud cheers a cash prize of 3,000,000 Belgian franks, a medal and a Diploma Certificate by the King of Belgium were handed to me by the monarch of Belgium.

Having laid the prizes aside I paid my courtesies to the royal family and walking to the mike made my speech under the title "To Vishvodaya (Dawn of the World) through Vishvadana (Universal sharing). The ceremony was followed by a party for 500. Belgian Sarvodaya workers as Reny Geerts and Jack Jansen who had never even seen their king personally. Now they got a chance to talk to him too that made them jubilant.

A dinner followed. Four people sat at each table. And at my table sat Neetha and myself and the royal couple. Ambassador and Mrs. D.A. de Silva, PM and his wife sat at another table. Queen Fabiola told me that Asian foodstuff was bought in the raw by her and a Sri Lanka meal had been prepared. Her humility just shone through.

We next participated in functions with organisations, universities and Sarvodaya workers and returned home. On December 10th on PM's instructions a special venue allotted to special guests had been prepared for us on our arrival at the airport.

Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, Secretary to the President and Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya welcomed us though I was rather averse to the fanfare. Next we were taken by procession to Damsak Mandira.

Next afternoon at Navarangahala there was a festive ceremony and Prof. Nandadasa Kodagoda's speech was brilliant. At Mr. Albert Edirisinghe's house old boys welcomed me and Prof. Vinnie Vitharana made a valuable speech. On December 20, at a welcome ceremony by the Central Council of Social Services the speakers were Mr. Leel Gunasekera, Dr. D. Wesumperuma and

Mr. S. R. Wijetileka, retired judge of the Supreme Court. The media gave a full coverage to all the speeches.

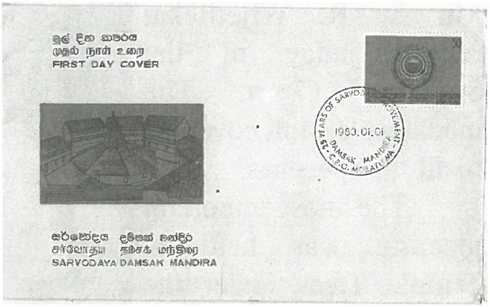
Photo 147 -
Being received by PM Mr. R.Premadasa at Temple Trees

The most important meeting was held at Temple Trees under the aegis of Prime Minister R. Premadasa. A special stage was constructed and 1500 guests had been invited. Having taken part in a program at Calcutta between December 23 and 26, I came back on the 26th. When I woke a dream I had came back to my memory. Our President pretending to be a doctor had examined my ailment. As I went over the dream I heard the TV broadcasting that the government had won the referendum.The whole thing is food for thought. On January 1, 1983 the Postal Dept. issued a special stamp to commemorate 25 years of Sarvodaya. (Publication No. 133 gives full details)

Designed by Mrs. Palitha Gunasinghe the 4-coloured stamp had the Sarvodaya crest in the centre with a garland and two paddy stalks in the backgound replete with an image of the globe too. This stamp was released by Mr. D. B. Wijetunga, then Minister of Post and Telecommunications who later became Prime Minister and President.

At 4.30 p.m. the Prime Minister had arranged a grand ceremony to welcome me. I attended it and next day, on January 2, 1983 flew to America to address a World Bank Conference. I came back on January 16 since I had to attend an AIRD seminar held at Bangalore. I am writing this seated in the visitor's room at AIRD.

The PM is a perfectionist and the ceremony he arranged to welcome me transpired this feature of him. It was completely rid of a political veneer. No green colour was visible anywhere. Seats were allocated to PM and his lady and to me and Neetha. On my request Mr. Karunananda too was called to the stage.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முதல் நாள் உறை
FIRST DAY COVER
50
1983.01.01
25 YEARS OF SARVO
DAMSAK MANDI
G.P.O. MORATUWA
සර්වෝදය දම්සක් මන්දිර
சர்வோதய தம்சக் மந்திர
SARVODAYA DAMSAK MANDIRA

Photo 148 -
Stamp that commemorated 25 years of Sarvodaya

As we entered Temple Trees, Mr. B.Weerakoon, PM's Secretary and Mr. Paskaralingam ushered us in. Mr. and Mrs. Premadasa welcomed Neetha and me and the children and my mother affectionately. After tea we were all taken along the red carpet to the stage to the beat and rhythm of Kandyan dancers.

About 1500 guests were there including Ministers, MPs, high government officers, District and Gramodaya Chairmen, Mayors and invitees from Sarvodaya. A very graphic welcome speech was made by Mr. K. H. J. Wijedasa. Mr. Shelton Premaratne rendered a song composed by Arisen Ahubudu. The PM made a long speech evaluating my service to the country and the world. Then a gift wrought in silver in the shape of our island on which was engraved an important message was given to me.

Photo 149-
Premier R. Premadasa with my mother

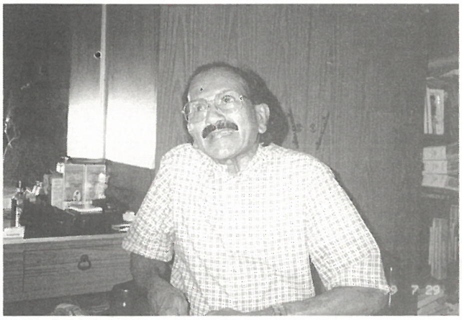

Photo 150 -
Musician Mr. Shelton Premaratne

I made a reply speech themed around humanity, where I appreciated the humanity exhibited by the premier who extrolled ordinary humans like me with State honours while humanity itself was fleeing from the educated, the rich and the powerful. Later I handed through my mother the receipt depositing the Baudouin Award and the cash prize to the PM through Mr. Karunananda.

The money was to be used for establishing a national Sarvodaya Award. Annually those who perform especial service to humanity, peace and development will be awarded. By a Parliament Act the investment in the Sarvodaya Trust Fund was legalized. And the annual Sarvodaya Award Ceremony is given through this fund.

Photo 151 - Mr. Premadasa gifting a trophy. Mrs. Hema Premadasa is also in pix.

Photo 152 -
Hosting my mother and my family at Temple Trees

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Vishvodaya through Vishvadana

Lecture delivered on receiving the King Baudouin Prize for International Development at the Royal Palace, Brussels, Belgium, on 24th November 1982

May it please,
Your Majesties, the King of Belgium, and Queen Fabiola,
Your Royal Highness Prince Albert, Princess Paola,
Hon. The Prime Minister,
Hon. Ministers and Members of Parliament.
Chairman and Board of Directors of the King Baudouin Foundation,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with a deep sense of humility and renewed faith in the goodness of humanity that I stand before you in this August assembly to accept the King Baudouin International Development Prize.

I consider this to be an occasion where honour and recognition are being bestowed by the Foundation upon all those humble or prudent individuals and groups who have accepted the Sarvodaya Thought and pursued the Shramadana Action to build up a more humane society. Therefore, this memorable occasion is a moment of joy not only for me but equally also for several thousands of brothers and sisters who tread the Sarvodaya path. On behalf of all of them ranging from the humblest people in the backwoods of Sri Lanka to discerning people of advanced societies who gave them fraternal cooperation, I wish to thank the Foundation most sincerely for selecting me to receive this prestigious award.

In the words of my Supreme Teacher The Gautama Buddha, who dwelt in North India during the Sixth Century B.C.

"Manopubbangama dhamma
Manosettha manomaya
Manasa ce padutthena
bhasati va karoti va
Tato nam dukkhamanveti
cakkam va vahato padam".

The meaning of this Pali stanza is:

"Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught - ox".

Then the Exalted One continues with a second stanza:

"Manopubbangama dhamma
Manosettha manomaya
Manasa ce pasannena
bhasati va karoti va
Tato nam sukhamanveti
Chaya'va anapayini".

which means-

"Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves."

The lesson we learn from this teaching is that if we can put our mental faculties right then everything else in the world would be put right.

Looking at our human society dispassionately, you will bear with me when I say that in spite of the great affluence and marvels of science, we see around us, most human beings are unhappy. Some do suffer due to their excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the senses. Others suffer because they lack the basic needs of a decent life. Yet others suffer due to hierarchical violence imposed upon them by the way their societies are structured or from wars and strife imposed upon them by opposing religious, ethnic, or ideological confederates.

The governments of the world have generally failed to show a way out of this sad impasse. But governments are formed of human beings. If governments have failed then, we have to acknowledge that as human beings there is much for us to do. If we are to succeed in our endeavour, we have no choice but to accept the importance of re-building man, his immediate family, his community and probably his whole environment. This is a great and difficult task fraught with immense challenges but I do believe that there is no easier way.

Such a human re-construction effort has to be sustained locally as well as globally in its thought as well as its practice. The motivation for such an endeavour has to be derived from a very powerful reflection relevant to the times we are living in. It should have a unique appeal to the affluent and the deprived in our world so that together they may search for and march towards a common goal of real happiness.

The supreme thought that we have chosen in order to march towards that happiness is Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya is a word coined by Mahatma Gandhi. **'Sarva'** means All; **'Udaya'** means Awakening. Therefore Sarvodaya means the Awakening of All- the awakening of the entire humanity as individuals, families, rural and urban communities, national societies and as inhabitants of the one and only planet in which all of us live.

What is awakening? If I apply it to myself, the human being, it is a three dimensional integrated process that should take place in my personality.

Firstly, I must continuously awaken myself to the real nature of my own psycho- physical entity called my personality. Who am I? What is the path leading to my supreme happiness? Is it through increased greed, hatred and ignorance within me that I can find happiness or is it through a process of gradual decrease in these threefold defilements?

Secondly, how do I awaken to the realities of society with all its complexities? What should be the nature of the moral, cultural, social, political and economic environment which will help me to awaken my personality to the fullest?

Thirdly, how do I awaken myself to the realities of my natural environment consisting as it does of land, water, air and sunshine and various living beings including the plant kingdom?

If I succeed in getting my personality to awaken in this three-fold dimension, then I believe that I am on the path to happiness which will help my inner life to be in harmony with the outer world.

The acceptance of the thought of awakening of all or Sarvodaya motivates one to work not only for one's personal well-being but also for the well-being of all other human beings. It even extends further. One has to safeguard the purity, survival and sustenance of one's environment. Truth, Non-violence and Self-denial become living tenets in such a person's life.

Why do we as individuals need such an unassailable value system? Because we need strong personalities in the world guided by such value systems, if we are to develop the sense of faith needed to survive as a species on this planet. We have always to remember that we are living in a world where greed in man is manifested in wide-spread extremes of poverty, hunger, squalor and disease, where suspicion and hatred among nations are manifested in the swelling stockpiles of armaments in rich and poor countries alike and where organised ignorance is manifested by the mountains of propaganda and counter propaganda material distributed the world over in order to force one's sectarian views down the throats of others.

The type of human being we need for the world today is one which has the courage to reject these dreadful systems of organised evil which have made us decivilized; we need the type of leadership which will strive to re-build a new man who has the strength of character to harness the good that is in all of us. This new man in turn shall re-build our human society and a new human civilization on more abiding values.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is determined to build a new man and a new society. In Sri Lanka we started this process by enabling human beings to come together to share their time, thought and energy for the awakening of a process of sharing which is called Shramadana.

We selected several of the poorest of the poor villages in Sri Lanka and while living and working with the villagers, together we evolved a series of concepts and a methodology to improve their quality of life by their own efforts. Self Reliance, Community Participation and a Planned Programme to satisfy their basic human and community needs were three important ingredients in this self-development process.

Sarvodaya defines development as an awakening process. An ever increasing accumulation of goods and services created to feed greed in man is not development. On the contrary development is an awakening process taking place within individuals, families and communities in which their needs are first satisfied without polluting the mind, poisoning the body, destroying the ecological balance, violating the cultural boundaries, widening prevailing disparities or demeaning human nature.

Development in a true sense should enrich people both materially and spiritually so qualities of sharing, brotherhood and peace ennoble all people.

The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka has grown in stature in its 25 years of existence. The participation in its programmes of thousands of people from all walks of life and from all parts of the world has enabled it to attain its present strength. Today the movement is active in over 5000 villages in Sri Lanka alone. People in these Sri Lankan villages belong to different religious, ethnic, linguistic and political groups.

Building a Nation is Building its People. People mean infants, children, youth, mothers, farmers, workers, elders and other adults. Nobody can be excluded, not even the infirm and the disabled. Sarvodaya has designed a development process so that all categories of people are enabled to participate meaningfully in their own development.

Nearly five thousand nurseries for pre-school children, over 300 village re-awakening and co-ordinating centres, 24 district development education institutes, several agricultural and rural technical services centres, and over 3000 shramadana camps are organised every year, and conducted by the movement as a living and growing experience in its endeavour to build a new man and a new society.

A common characteristic of all these programmes is their indigenous spirituo-cultural base on the one hand and their international dimension for universal application on the other.

The Sarvodaya effort has inspired and encouraged governmental and many non-governmental institutions to adopt several of its concepts and programmes in the services of the nation. Similarly the Sarvodaya message and services have reached many countries both rich and poor because of its universal validity.

I first came to Belgium in the late nineteen sixties. At that time I was surprised at the poor level of understanding of the so-called third-world problems and the indifference displayed towards these even by people who could claim to be educated.

I remember the days and late evenings I spent with communities in Belgium beginning with the village Balen, and then Meerhout and Zelzate and later with many others to explain the importance for the peoples of our countries to establish communication links of their own so that one day there could be a dialogue on problems we face in each other's situations and the ways and means of helping each other to find solutions to those problems. The day the first village link-up programme was established between Balen in Belgium and Halmillawewa in Sri Lanka, that was a historic day of joy for me. I was very much moved when I came to learn that I was nominated for this award by one of those pioneers in Balen Mr. Jef Sleecks who is now a Member of Parliament. Today we have over forty such links in Belgium. The Netherlands, West Germany and Canada followed suit immediately after.

I must mention here with a sense of gratitude the contribution made by the people of Belgium through the National Centrum of the 11-11-11 campaign and the World Assembly of Youth towards the promotion of our Movement. This was the first ever international contribution our Movement received. Later NOVIB of the Netherlands, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung of West Germany, Helvetas in Switzerland, OXFAM (U.K), OXFAM (Canada), OXFAM (America), World University Service (Canada), International NGO Division of CIDA (Canada), NORAD (Norway), UNICEF, WHO, ATI (Washington), HKI (U.S.A.) IDRC (Canada), Ford Foundation, DANIDA (Denmark) and ITDG (U.K.) and several other individuals and groups helped the Movement at various stages to reach its present level of development and credibility.

On this historic occasion, it is equally fitting that I should refer to the Belgian youths who came to Sri Lanka and worked for the Movement and participated in its activities. They blazed a new trail in international development co-operation where the need for building psychological bridges between our countries was recognised. Today volunteers from over 30 different countries are working shoulder to shoulder with our workers in the Movement.

With this ceremony at which I receive the King Baudouin Award for International Development in the presence of Your Majesties our mutual concern for the people of our two countries and our commitment for a new world order are further cemented and strengthened.

In our Sarvodaya terminology I wish to call such a friendship 'Vishvadana' which means Universal Sharing. If in your country people suffer due to the ill-effects of an over industrialized technological civilization such a situation should become the concern of us in Sri Lanka too. By the same token, if people in my country suffer due to an international system of economic or political exploitation such a situation would no doubt receive your concern too. With mutual respect and understanding, we should be able to help each other to overcome our problems by a process of universal sharing.

I do not like the world aid in vogue today. It has a connotation which demeans the giver as well as the receiver. On the other hand a process of sharing the best in our Cultures for the mutual benefit of human awakening towards peace and happiness ennobles both parties. No country in the world could lay claim to what they have achieved as the outcome of their own exclusive endeavour.

Universal Sharing or Vishvadana should invariably lead to Universal Awakening or Vishvodaya. Universal Awakening is not a distant or illusory ideal. It is with you and me here and now.

What we call 'I' is only a continuously changing phenomenon of the five aggregates, namely, of form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. These make up the sum total of all human existence. We should not pre-suppose that there is an 'I' as distinct and separate from the 'world'. In reality 'I' and 'world' are part of the experience which arises because of consciousness. Through mindfulness of the arising of phenomena, we can liberate ourselves from the illusory conjuring of the mind.

The first, second, third and even fourth worlds of which we are talking are all illusions of our mind. Apart from our consciousness, these worlds do not exist. Therefore let us look at our own minds and try to observe how universal we are. The more I develop a universal consciousness, to that extent I am free. Only true freedom leads to true happiness.

Universal consciousness awakening - Vishvodaya - and universal sharing - Vishvadana - have to develop and progress hand in hand. The one cannot develop without the other. Without progress in both there will never be an end to suffering, suspicion, exploitation, strife, wars and misery.

Let us not wait until North - South and East - West dialogues succeed. Let us radiate from our minds and hearts a universal love towards the entire living world. Let every single one of us take a personal responsibility and make a personal commitment to eradicate hunger of a fellow being somewhere on this planet, to bring shelter to a family exposed to sun and rain, to help self-development of a community of people who are denied their fundamental human rights and last but not least bring joy of living and mental peace to millions of human beings who are spiritually starved.

This is what I meant at the beginning of my address when I spoke about putting our mental faculties right. This personal commitment on our part will extend itself to our families, groups, institutions and governments so that we become active participants in liberating a universal process where causes that lead to suffering are removed from this earth. When the causes are removed, the effects will not be there. This is the true joy of living.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is committed to strive towards this universality. Its target groups are drawn not only from the materially impoverished but extends to the spiritually starved as well. The recognition you have given this Movement re-affirms our faith in the efficacy of our thought and actions. The monetary award you have given will go into a common fund to help and encourage individuals and small groups in Sri Lanka and elsewhere who selflessly work for harmony, development and peace among human communities. I appeal to all concerned human beings, families and institutions, to make a commitment to strengthen this effort. I appeal to all governments of the world and their leaders to invest more of their time and resources to rebuild a new world on the solid foundations of personality, family and community reawakening.

Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I in all humility appeal for your continued co-operation in spreading the message of peace, harmony and goodness among all peoples.

May the Whole Living World be Well and Happy!

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A stream of thought from heart to heart

Speech made by Prof. Nandadasa Kodagoda when I returned after having won the King Baudouin Award at Navarangahala, Colombo, December 17, 1982

Dear Ari,

It is with some trepidation that I address you on the occasion of the receipt of your award. I wonder whether what I am going to say will have an imprint on your heart. But it is natural for a stream of thought from one heart to seep into another, especially as one as sensitive as yours.

Today is a Red Letter Day for all of us, but I feel the significance more perhaps due to the very close bond between us. Out

Photo 153 -
Being taken in procession to Nava Ranga Hala

Photo 154 -
Prof. Nandadasa Kodagoda. On my right is co-ordinator
Mr. Thirunavukarsu and Mr. M.W. Karunananda

of the events I faced this seems to be the one that generates the optimum self-pride within me. Though we lived in a controlled environment the facts I am about to present originate not from my head but from my heart. Hence these facts are less infused with an intellectural value, but are suffused with an intimacy of a genuine nature. So I request you to evaluate all, let me say with your heart and not with your head.

Till recent times I used to address you as Tudor, the name you were addressed as a boy. Maybe when you were named so, no one had foreseen your future. This name came to use in England in the year circa 1400 in Wales. The dynasty line begun by Emperor Tudor and his wife, earlier widow of Henry V, began to be known as the Tudor dynasty. There is even a tradition of architecture known as the Tudor architecture. That you don't belong to the Tudor dynasty is our fortune. But you happen to be an architect, an architect who culled a new social order. So in a circumspect way you too can be reckoned a Tudor. However, the name Ariyaratne fits you more. It is not because the whole world knows you by that name, but because the name fits you to a T. You have become an Arya Ratne.

Despite all the grandiose titles bestowed on you, many may wonder why I call you just Ari. I do not apologise for it. It was not you who were ennobled by the DLitt. conferred on you, but the Campus that awarded it to you. What more embellishments are needed for the awards you have won via your mammoth efforts? You bring a shine to the very institution you lead. Further many great men are addressed by short pet names. It implies a closeness.

I like to get back 40 years with you. Our lives then were so simple. We were rid of materialism and competition of the rat race. Poverty may have dampened us a bit, but we led such a relaxed life between home and school. I remember you skipping on the rail tracks trying to balance without falling. Never did you nor I foresee that your path would end in the Belgian Royal Palace. Never did you display ambitions along these lines.

You had some somersaults in schools. Revolutionary ideas seeped into you. By birth itself and also through your family you had come to own a love for the nation and religion which traits were intensified by your alma mater, Mahinda College. There your language proficiency sharpened. Great men like Woodward (Wanapala) influenced you. Great teachers influenced you. These supplied the formative factors in your life.

But you saw the reality of society and life with your own eyes. You analysed them with your own intellect. Your own environment and experiences helped you to rise. Forty years ago one

Photo 155-
Audience at the ceremony

Photo 156 -
Making the Vote of Thanks

morning I remember the Mahinda kids play about uninhibited. The shadows of Sri Pada as usual had fallen on the Mihindu mountain range. As usual the Sal trees before the principal's office too bloomed as every other day. But on the face of the little brat who stood at his door, there was no bloom. He was troubled, due to a mis-understanding for which he had no solution.

He had undergone frustration. But he left school undefeated. He never tried to run away from the problem, but to take on the responsibility of the problems pervading the total society. So a stimulus was born out of a crisis. Who the central figure here is, I need not tell you. The Sarvodaya social revolution began with a small ember lighted by you.

The historical Kanatholuwa tour was not a journey by itself nor an end, but a beginning. For many such a journey is an end only. On reminiscing this a very esteemed quality surfaces in you. I will dwell on it now. Many began to dissuade you from the idea of Kanatholuwa. But you remained immune. You listened to me and followed me. But even the 'warners' you did not cease to associate. I remember you discussing this situation later and telling me that crises sharpen a determination. I must tell you that I had my doubts but now I know that you were correct.

Another incident I remember. I warned you about your association with a certain individual who had a mental deformity.

My association with him would be salutary to him, you argued. I know about the condition and I deliberately associate him as a help to him, you added.

Though you rose to the very apex of society and was always busy yet you used to visit me whenever you could. Your presence lit up our house. My wife prepares you a cup of tea happily. My children talk to you with the utmost respect. Your ease on our balcony makes me happy. I remember you biting on a guava showing me an acquired sophistication to deceive me.

I do not want to go on and on. If all this sounded advice forgive me. It is a friend talking. Today you have reached the very top in society, not through any birthright or wealth, but through your own effort. Hence you should bow only to someone higher than you in this respect. Today you are in a position to get the whole world before you. But this does not mean that you should cultivate pride in you. You are humble, you have magnetism. Bear this in mind, never let your humanity belittle you.

Ari, forgive me for advising you. But I did so to ensure that your work and your life go on as long as they can.

You who have been trying to raise humanity through nonviolence are very close to the state of Nibbana and till you enter that, be born again and again in Lanka.

Yours sincerely,
Nande

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A Doctorate in Humanities

It was the first week of April 1983. Time about 4.30 a.m. when I left Okinawa. I reached Manila at 3.30 a.m. Dr. Espando Pinada, Mr. and Mrs. Lilia Ramos, my elder son Vinya and Thilak Karunaratne, now a voluntary worker (earlier an ex-officer at Kegalle Sarvodaya Centre) were at the airport. We came straight to the house of Ms. Belen Abrew. I bathed and slept for about 2 hours.

According to the program I went for lunch at the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction in Cavite, Das Marinas. Having met the educational head, I had lunch with the staff. At 4.30 p.m. I delivered my lecture. There were more than 30 students from different countries.

Dr. James C. Yen

I was happy to learn of the presence of Dr. Yen who began the International Rural Reconstruction Movement. I had a one-hour discussion with him. Two years ago Mrs. Yen had died and before the house he lived, her tomb had been erected in a bed of flowers.

Dr. James Yen, rose into international fame during the First World War when he began educating Chinese workers labouring in France. Later he came to China and with President Chiang Kai Shek's help began his educational movement in China itself. Later the rise of Communism made him shift his activities to Taiwan and Philippines. In 1950 with the aid of the President Magsaysay he began this village development programme and further became his adviser. This was his golden period. He based his village

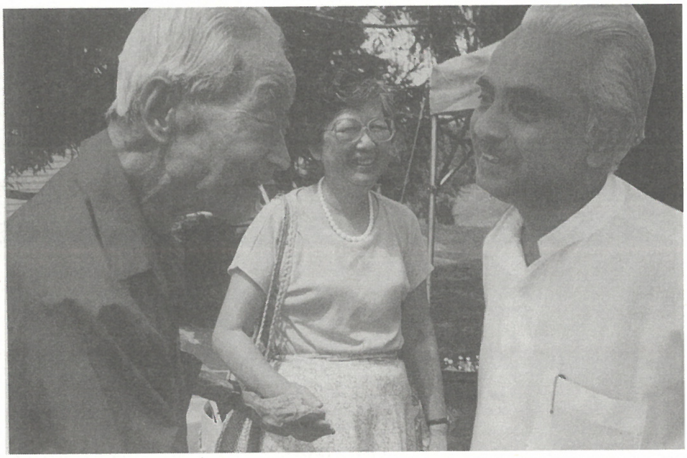

Photo 157 -
Dr. James Yen, his daughter and I at New York

development on the four cornerstones of Education, Health, Livelihood and Self-governance. An integration of all these he envisaged and his fame spread. The beautiful book "Tell the People", is his biography written by Nobel Laureatte Pearl S. Buck.

I met him first in 1967 at Singapore when I was attending a seminar organized by the World Assembly of Youth. I got an invitation to dine with him and his wife. He wished to extend his services to Sri Lanka but it never materialized.

Having welcomed our group, Jimmy Yen began to talk enthusiastically about the present world situation. He was a short, thin man who postulated that the struggle between the powerful and powerless will cease only by helping the weak or the powerless. They need social justice and a moderate living standard. He was 90 years old, but the mental energy activating him had not weakened. He said he would be going to America shortly and on his way back could come to Sri Lanka and said he was very impressed about Sarvodaya work.

Dr. Campos

After dinner, for the night rest we went to the house of Dr, Campos. It is a large abode on a hillock. Before the house is a

Photo 158 -
At the Convocation

swimming pool. Dr. Campos descends from an aristocratic family and he is the eldest in the family of seven males. He owns the Aguinaldo University Medical College, Manila Medical Centre and the Medical College Hospital. He is also the Chairman of all these. I came to Philippines this time to make an address at the 1st Convocation at Aguinaldo University and receive a Doctorate given for the first time to a foreigner.

Dr. Campos's wife is also a doctor, and is the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Another lady who is the Dean of the Medical

Photo 159 -
At the Convocation

Photo 160 -
Making the convocation address

Faculty of the University that Vinya attends too was there. We had our dinner there. It was delicious.

Next day after tea, Dr. Campos directed me to be subject to a medical examination in the hospital saying he has already allotted a room for me. We spent about 3 hours in the morning to meet the Dean and the staff of Vinya's university and tour the place. I was impressed with the place and asked Vinya to continue his studies there.

We came for lunch to Manila, where Belan Abrew, Mr. Manehan, Chairman and members of the Magsaysay Institute and Mrs. Raven Hart also joined us. In the afternoon 'APPRO-TECH Philippines' and the university had arranged a lecture at Philippines Women's University. Theme was "How to develop a Third World Country". Leading roles were played by Mr. Ernie Garilao, Dr. Paulo and Mrs. Lilia Ramos. I also delivered a very successful lecture. No confused expressions, no wrong words and I stressed on the following points - 'That the development concept should be subject to a revolutionary change, that society should be rid of poverty, that community leadership should get priority as against international hegemony. Everybody was impressed.

Then I went to the Manila Medical Centre, a very modern place. Room No. 71 was allotted to me, a very sophisticated room. There was even a TV and a drawing room. There a medical check-up began.

Photo 161 -
With the graduated doctors

Went out with Ernie and Lilia for a meal and came back to hospital and slept with Vinya. Again was subject to check-up. from 5 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. but in the meantime I went to Mrs. Abrew's house too.

April 8th was a Red letter day. The Convocation was on that day. At 4.30 p.m. went to the Philem Life Centre in Manila. Dr. Campos, Mrs. Campos, Dr. Pinada and Faculty members and students were all there. Dr. Pinada wrapped round me a red cloak, especially prepared for me. Mrs. Solidad L. Dolores, Chairperson of Emilio Aquinaldo College of Medicine and a MP and Ambassador Hussain too had come.

Just 5 minutes before 5 p.m. after the invited guests sat the Convocation procession began. First the youth getting their certificates as doctors came in. Then the Faculty members, then I came in flanked by Dr. Campos and Mr. Dolores. The hall was full with about 1500 people. The head chair was reserved for me. First the Philippines National flag was hoisted and then the Medical College flag. After the National Anthem was sung, a Catholic priest performed the religious rituals.

Then the Dean, Dr. Lodus E. Campos introduced the graduates and Chairperson, Dr. Paulo Campos declared them to be worthy of the certificates. Next I was introduced by Dr. Estebaan Pinada, Vice President of the Education Commission, a service done excellently. Now was my speech. Actually my speech was not a prepared one. I spoke on how a Doctor's service and duties contribute to the investment of youth labour in building a better world. I felt that it had a deep effect on the audience.

Next Dr. Campos walked to the mike and made the following declaration.

'This is the declaration and certificate pertaining to the conferment of the D.Litt on Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne.

He is a leader of men, a lover of men, an epitome of humanity and simplicity and a living example of service to his brethren.

With an acute understanding of the problems besetting the development of his country in 1958 he began a movement called the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. Its great success earned him the Magsaysay Award in 1969. Next he won the King Baudouin Award. He presents a development strategy that is adaptable to the resources, culture of life-style of ones country and has really ended up a world citizen. As recognition of all his endeavours the Emilio Aguinaldo Medical College confers on him the Doctorate in Humanities, today, on April 8, 1983.'

Signed
Solidad D. Dolare

Paulo C. Campos
Chairman of Trustee

Lodus E. Campos
Dean

After this I was wrapped in a red and yellow shawl.

Then began the award of certificates to 101 new doctors. This was the first batch of them to be out. A very touching scene, was that the parents were called on to the stage to help in the wrapping of the shawl.

At about 7.00 p.m. the convocation was over. Pius C. Vilanuwova, a prominent student, got everybody to take the oath of allegiance to the university and the profession collectively. The flag was brought down, college song sung and ceremony was over, We left the hall.

We were invited for dinner at a Chinese Cafe and dined with the rest of the Campos family. Back at Ms. Abrew's house, we went to sleep.

On the 9th took place a meeting with the officers in APPROTECH Asia Office, lunch at Manila Community Foundation and participating in a party hosted by the Ambassador.

I feel light in heart these days. This is because I see Vinya studying here not only with responsibility, but he has also won the hearts of everyone. His teachers and friends and all those in the camp love him.

It is such a consolation to me.

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The Art of Healing Humanity

The convocation address delivered at Aguinaldo College of Medicine, Philippines on April 9, 1983 after the bestowing of Doctorate in Humanities on me by the university.

As a parent, as a lover of humanity, as a friend of the Philippines, as a man who has great hopes in youth for the future of humanity, I am overjoyed to see the beaming and beautiful faces of 101 of you who are graduating today and going into the broad world to serve humanity. Therefore I would like to thank the Board of Trustees and the Faculty of the Aguinaldo College of Medicine for inviting me today to speak to you a few words of inspiration.

When we look back to the history of our countries, we know that before independence we had great men who dedicated and sacrificed their lives to win freedom for us which all of us enjoy today. After independence, then again, we had great men who sacrificed their lives to achieve a better quality of life for our people. I believe that in all the developing countries now, a third age, a third era, has dawned. We are in a world where three decades of development have not brought about any significant results. Our poor brothers and sisters, the vast majority of people in our countries, are still in a state of abject poverty and powerlessness. Every minute there are twenty eight people, we are told, who are dying with causes related to malnutrition. There is hardly any country, among the poorer countries on this earth, where people are not fighting their own people, and lives are not lost meaninglessly every day. We are living in a world of that nature-divided, alienated, exploited and tormented. In such a world no human being worth that name should possess very narrow ideas. We should have the highest possible ideals at a demanding and a challenging time like this. The best in a human being generally comes up when he is faced with the greatest challenges.

Today, we are living in a world where no national or international leaders can solve problems. We need millions and millions of leaders, in every nook and corner of our countries if we are to build up a human society where people will live in peace with their basic needs satisfied and which we can call a no-poverty society. This is where those of us who have had access to higher education have a special obligation and a responsibility. How many of us in the human family have the capacity or the opportunity to reach the level of education and attainments in knowledge which you have reached today? When you look at the world today, as young doctors you have two alternative choices before you. You can think only of yourself and have endless, inordinate greed to guide you. We know that greed, when organized can create aversion and hatred. Greed and hatred together can organize and sustain ignorance. When greed, hatred and ignorance are thus combined and utilized in a world where science and technology are dominant, the result can be chaos. On the other hand, all of us have non-greed within us. We have a lot of beneficence within us. We should share whatever we have with others. We have lots of love within us. We have lots of enlightenment within us. Imagine, if we can harness these noble qualities, what a tremendous force we can generate? What a contented and peaceful world could we create? We have doctors who have by their selfish action and practices organized greed. On the other hand we have doctors who have organized beneficence by their gracious qualities of sharing and compassion. Into which category are you going to fall? This is the best time for you to make your choice.

Today, in a world where science and technology dominate the highest knowledge that man has gained is used in a selfish and irrational way for the benefit of a few. You have the unique opportunity to bring that knowledge down to the people. This is a very good opportunity to place before ourselves such an ideal - dedicating ourselves to achieve an objective of this nature - the ideal of helping all, the ideal of awakening of all, the ideal of trying to embrace the entire humanity in your mind and heart.

When a doctor fills his heart with compassion, then such a person emits a certain radiant thought - wave. Noble thoughts thus emanating have a very great therapeutic value for the poor patient, who is waiting till the doctor appears. When you dispense medicine or when you speak a kind word to a person who is eagerly expecting your help, that is compassionate action which touches his heart. Compassion combined with compassionate action will give you a tremendous joy. This joy cannot be measured in monetary or such other terms. Can a mother measure the joy of seeing the smile of her little baby in her arms? It is such a joy you must learn to possess. Such a joy, when accumulated, gives certain equilibrium to our mind. Your heart grows larger and you are possessed with a strength to face loss or gain with a detached mind. Equanimity then possesses your inner being, and that is the type of human being we need in the world today.

We are trying to build up our countries on the Western paradigm. We thought that the Western World was developed. We thought that the Western World was affluent. I am just returning, after spending five weeks in the most affluent society that the world has yet seen. What did I see there? Pockets of poverty-what you may call a Third World in the heart of an affluent society, where some families even do not have proper water and sanitation facilities. We should not think of the so-called affluent societies as our models. Third Worlds and Fourth Worlds are there right inside those societies. These societies now have 15% or so who are unemployed. Even medical graduates are becoming unemployed now. Therefore, we have to think differently now. We have to give up our colonial mentality. Are we going to those affluent societies in search of wealth, emulating their goals of life or are we going in search of the poor societies in our own countries and derive that joy of living by dedicated service to our own poor brothers and sisters? This is a decision we all have to make at this particular time in the history of our nations.

Our educated people, our rich people, our clever people, should go to those places where poor people live to bring them solace and joy. Ideological and other differences have torn our people apart. First they get divided mentally. When you get mentally divided due to various factors, it may be caste like in India, it may be class, it may be religion, it may be language or a political ideology, then you come to the next stage of developing some sort of prejudice, some sort of aversion in your minds which lead to the third stage where one man or a group of people begin to fear or hate other men. Now these three forces, force of division, force of aversion and force of fear or hatred build themselves into a psychology, a philosophy, an ideology, a social objective, where a group of people begin to think that another group of people are their inherent enemies. Where does this organized ignorance lead to? It does lead to a situation in this world where every single man, woman and child is threatened by violence. Two hundred tons of TNT are stored by great powers for every single one of us in this world. It is said that they have the devastating capacity to destroy this earth 20 times and more. That is the world in which we are living today. If we are to prevent this catastrophe taking place, a great change in our hearts, a radical transformation in our consciousness has to take place. Lord Jesus Christ said, " We have to lose ourselves to find ourselves completely". "We have to overcome our ego". Lord Buddha said "If we can overcome our ego, then only we can find out the truth, the true joy in life". You have to provide leadership to such a course of action dedicated for the service of man in the world today.

Your work should not be confined only to finding out the cause of a disease and then trying to provide the necessary medicaments to appease or control it. You have to remove the root causes of the disease. When you think of the Philippines, I 'm sure that at least 80% of the causes of disease are preventable. Thinking of your country and my country, I must say our countries are leading in the incidence of certain diseases. Let us take up the challenge. Let us eradicate them at their very roots. This can be done and the beginning of this eradication is a change in our value system, our attitudes, and in our mental make-up. "I am a human being because I realize that I have such potential greatness in me. An animal cannot get the entire living world into its mind and/or its heart as I can. Only a human mind can embrace the entire living world. I am a human being with a human mind. And this human consciousness can be raised to a universal level". Learn to think like that.

After the industrial revolution, we all had to realize that science neglected one part of our brain. It neglected the intuitive part of the brain, it neglected the part that "contained" wisdom. Only that measurable empirical part of the brain was developed. The result is that the people began to crave for fame, money, power and knowledge. All these things lead to the inevitable destruction of man. That is why, today we have the privilege of developing both sides of the brain, both knowledge and reason, spirituality and love, intuition and insight. That sort of force was not earlier recognised by science.

Today, scientists even Nobel Laureates in Physics are talking about the importance and the inter-relatedness of human consciousness. We need a force that can rebuild the universal consciousness where human beings at every level begin to think not about acquisition but more about brotherhood and sharing. That is indeed a new world we have to build. Everybody in the present society has to give a leadership in this direction in order to make this ideal a success. That is the only direction in which the world has to proceed if we are to stop a nuclear catastrophe or total pollution of the environment where unknowingly all of us are subjected to a gradual toxic poisoning throughout the world. Therefore dear brothers and sisters, who are graduating today, I am not talking to you as an outsider, but as a man from a friendly country, as a person who believes in a very great future for you and for all mankind. Those of us in Asia who inherited all world religions have to give leadership to the whole of humanity. I have been to many countries and I have met leaders of those countries, both at a national level and at rural and community level. The more I see them and the more I talk to them, the more I begin to believe that we who are in Asia have to give a leadership and this leadership has to be founded on the harmonization of science and spirituality - A happy union of reason and intuition.

What greater profession is there than that of yours which bring these together? Can you practise your profession without love? You cannot; when a mother lulls her baby to sleep, and then falls asleep near the baby, she wakes up when the baby cries, and feeds the baby. When again the mother is about to fall asleep, the baby cries again. The mother goes on and on the whole night through without proper sleep. In the morning she gets up and goes about the work, as if she has had a long and sound sleep. The secret of her strength is the great love she has for the baby.

Next to a mother, it is only a doctor who can tax himself in like manner. Those doctors who have this love as their motivating force receiving inspiration and guidance from it and who have the knowledge to put that love into concrete action, are the doctors worth the name. After all, the greatest virtue a human being can have is respect for life and it is you who try to save life. Whenever you dispense to the patient it is not only the patient who derives joy every moment. Your personality is enriched by the joy you get in helping to lessen the pain of another. You begin to see something divine within you; you see a spiritual awakening within you and that spiritual awakening will never let you down. In all your life, it would sustain you guiding and inspiring you, providing you with strength when you need it. It will take you to greater and greater heights, which people who have vicious and less worthwhile goals will never achieve in all their life here.

Photo 162 -
Dr Vinya Ariyaratne examining a patient

This is the message I have to give on this occasion to you young Graduates who are on the threshold of a great and noble career. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, President and members of the Faculty, I would like to thank you very sincerely for deciding to confer this honorary doctorate on me. I do not really understand whether I deserve all this. Very often I have been thinking as a man who is not interested in power, position or even a good name or fame. Why I receive so much of love, so much fraternity and much of affection I believe is because of the great humanity that is in you. This will make me more humble. This will sustain me with more courage. This will provide me more inspiration to continue my work in going in search of those who are the lowest, the lowliest and the lost in society and give them the real hope of a new world.

May I wish all of you very good health and great strength of mind to build up a noble world within our life-time, so that no man on this earth is hungry or nobody on this earth is angry. Thank you very much.

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Gam Udawa Programme

A few days after the reception he gave, Prime Minister and Mrs. Premadasa visited our house suddenly. Mr. Premadasa requested me to help him in a Gramodaya Programme along the lines of our own Gramodaya Programme. He mentioned the village of Badalgama in Kurunegala and asked for workers there. I promised to send Sumith Rupesinghe, a younster to look over the place and promised help through my ideas too. I kept to my promise and also agreed to craft an island wide village re-awakening programme subsequent to the opening of Udagama. I said it would be useful to subject ministers, MPs and officers to a training programme at Damsak Mandira.

According to the suggestion about half of the Ministers and MPs received an orientation at Damsak Mandira. Even officers of the highest grade participated in training sessions. All our resources were diverted to this training. I handed to him all the data necessary to regulate a Gramodaya Development Act. Not only resources but skilled and unskilled labour were provided by us. Once when I went to FNS in Germany, with its representative Mr. Paul Bischof, the German state gifted to me a ship load of cement. Mr. Premadasa made provision to store the cement in the State Building Materials Corporation. This cement was distributed to the venues of Udagam through Sarvodaya co-ordinators. A few were given to Sarvodaya personnel with needs. We also used this cement to build a number of pre-schools.

Some were averse to my aligning the Sarvodaya to Mr. Premadasa's Gam Udawa programme while yet others were pleased, depending on their political affiliations. But my policy was helping the state to eradicate poverty without sacrificing our policies.

Photo 163 -
At Temple Trees

Photo 164 -
The occassion on which the first Udagam training session was held at Damsak Mandira

Photo 165 -
Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala addressing the Gam Uda workshop

Some members of the Executive Council too did not approve my connection while many condoned it purely out of their confidence in me. My policy of help that included diverting the energy of academics like Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala was motivated by the belief that the PM was genuinely interested in rural welfare.

I also had an intuition that the UNP regime of 1977 would divert the country along capitalist lines. Here I felt that the new village re-awakening movement of Mr. Premadasa would dilute such a policy and surface the positive side of the Free Trade policy. I had a honest belief that that the Prime Minister would reinforce the Grama Swaraj concept of ours.

But before long I felt that I had not comprehended the actual motives of the PM. Yet undaunted I proposed to him an evaluation programme to be initiated by Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala to which he complied.

After this evaluation programme, Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala put out a book titled "Udagama Vimasuma" (Investigation of Udagam) with the help of FNS and distributed copies free.

The Prime Minister supplied a foreword. Many lapses were shown in the survey but the Prime Minister did not display an earnestness to correct them. Soon I got disenchanted especially with the ornate ceremonies that accompanied the opening of Udagam. I was asked to address many of these meetings that were becoming very extravagant and bringing in the evils of urbanization to idyllic villages.

From the PM's birthday on June 23, the 10 days were turned into an Udagam carnival. Concrete jungles came up in natural jungles of wilderness. Even the great intellectual Ananda Coomaraswamy had adulated the unspoilt rural Sinhala Buddhist village life and postulated that it could be an inspiration to the whole global civilization. We followed the non-pollution of village life ardently but now the very opposite was happening.

After my last participation in Kataragama Gam Udawa Ceremony of 1987, I refused to take part, annoying the PM. Another reason for my drifting away was the fact that JVP was

Photo 166 -
At a Gam Udawa

Photo 167 -
Delivering a lecture in the
Family Gathering Hall
at Moratuwa

Photo 168
- At a Sarvodaya pre-school at
Matugama

raising its head as an anti-government political force. If I went on with government alliance policy, our workers would be in danger. So I refused to participate in the 1988 Gam Udawa ceremony.

Photo 169 -
President & PM on their visit to a Sarvodaya centre in Ampara area

Yet he did not fall out with me.I was given the freed m to say what I pleased, even criticise the government. I even got down great men like Dr. R.R. Divaker of India and Dr. Juan Flavier of Philippines to speak at their ceremonies. At the initial Gam Udawa celebrations only President and his lady, Prime Minister and his lady and me and Neetha were on the stage, other than the Sangha and other clergy.

I do not know what motivated the Prime Minister to give us all this prominance. It could be actual recognition of our service or to counter balance the power of politicians like Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake.

A drunken bout by some followers of the Prime Minister was the final catalyst for my breakaway. I advised the PM that these stooges of his were bringing discredit on him. At end of 1987 and beginning of 1988, I was summoned by Mr. J.R. Jayewardene on several occasions. I had my doubt that some sabotage had begun. I also met the Prime Minister on several occasions, but never did he show displeasure.

Photo 170 -
Premier addessing a Gam Uda Ceremony

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AIRD

Photo 171 -
Mr. M.V. Rajasekeran

AIRD (Asian Institute of Rural Development) is sited at the city of Bangalore in Karnataka State. Its establishment was my friend M.V. Rajasekaran's idea. From 1960 we were friends as co-workers in the World Assembly of Youth. He was also a MP and a member of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and an exemplary character rid of the vices of bribery and corruption. He is married to a daughter of the famous Nijalingappa, one time Chairman of the Indian National Congress.

Though I worked as Chairman of this AIRD established to train young rural leaders of Asia and Africa in the 1970 decade the first members were Prof. K.C. Naik, Mr. M. S. Ramaih and Mr. M. V. Rakasekaran. The latter worked as ExecutiveTrustee while in the Board of Trustee worked Dr. Azeez Ul-Huq of Bangladesh, Dr. D. L. Umali of Philippines, Prof. Govind R. Agarwal of Nepal, Dr. Ralph W. Cummings of America, Mr. Ronald Lege of Canada and Dr. Sadik Malik of Pakistan and a few others.

Out of all such national and international bodies I have worked in I must say that AIRD was one very efficiently and transparently run, all its documents and accounts were in order that earned it the assistance of CIDA of Canada, Lincoln Land

Trust of America, and some other organisations. It further received the patronage of India's central government and state goverments.

The youth of Asia and Africa trained here numbered more than hundred annually. For students of 51 countries following courses were run – leadership training, technology, land reforms laws and methodology, community development, agriculture, handicrafts and career courses. Though Raja used to ascribe AIRD's success to me I know personally that he was the cause of its burgeoning. The monthly AIRD News publication became Asia's best publication, to which success Rajappa Setti was responsible. He passed away recently. The continuing success of AIRD, today run by Raja's daughter Mrs. Sandhya Pradeep Kumari is a source of joy to Raja and to me.

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Meeting with Bhagavan Sathya Shri Sai Baba

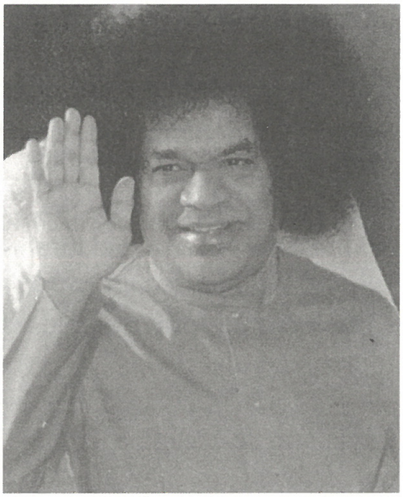

Photo 172 -
Bhagavan Satya Shri Sai Baba

Two reasons took me to India a certain year – one, to attend my annual meeting at the AIRD, the other to relax. I had no premediated plan to meet Satya Shri Sai Baba. But as I waited at Madras airport to fly to Bangalore my meeting with a Fonseka couple from Sri Lanka led to a desire to see Baba.

The young Fonseka couple, were teachers, working in Nigeria. Always enroute home on their vacation they made it a habit to visit Sai Baba and get his blessings. Their devotion to Buddhism did not deter them from having an acute faith in Sai Baba. I learnt from them that he was living then in Whitefield, Bangalore and every morning and evening daily he was accessible. Taking leave of the Fonsekas I along with Rajasekaran, Jothi malli and other officers of Sarvodaya who accompanied me, went to 'Rama' Hotel. Anyway on inquiry, I was told that Shri Sai Baba had gone over from Whitefield to his Prashanthi Nilayam Ashram in Puttaparthi in Ananthpur District of Andhra Pradesh. This meant a long journey. So we gave up the idea and began to attend to our scheduled duties. I held my lecture and gave a copy to the magazine. The AIRD meeting over we again mulled over our visit to Sai Baba and decided to go to Prasanthi Ashram in October 5, 1989. Almost miraculously surfaced a guide too.

That afternoon while working at the office, a dark tall gentleman came and greeted me. He was, he said, Rajappa Setti, who worked earlier in the Information Department and now worked part-time on our magazine whose back numbers he had come to peruse.

After reading them he again started chatting to me in the course of which I learnt that he was a devotee of Sai Baba. I informed him of our decision and as if rejuvenated he began to describe the spiritual powers of this extraordinary Swami.

Setti said that what a man cannot accomplish in a life time Swami had done in last two decades. As testimony of this stood out the cluster of hospitals, universities and schools he had put up, that also symbolised his love of humanity. In all his endeavours, said Setti, he transcended all racial, caste and religious barriers. But he neither mentioned his healing powers nor his creative capacity to perform miracles. To him however Sai Baba was a god in human guise.

Much impressed by this person, I invited him to be our guide and he accepted saying that Sai Baba would always give me an audience since he was attracted to people like me.

He further said that when he met Sai Baba a powerful spiritual energy entered him. And since he felt that I too have this energy, he said he would like to see Sai Baba and me together. This was no deceitful utterance to flatter me. I felt he was very genuine about it. And he himself was unique. I was glad to have him as a guide to novices like us.

Next morning we had our breakfast at about 7.00 a.m. and intoning ‘Sairam’ we began our holy trip. The jeep that took us from Bangalore to Hyderabad along route No. 7 drove at an incredible speed.

Passing the city limits of Bangalore, we entered Andhra Pradesh and within 1 1/2 hours we had reached its limits too. Climate was congenial and traffic was far from bustling. Yet the outlying environment flaunted no greenery nor beauty. The area was isolated and barren except a few paddy fields, sugar cane estates, mulberry cultivations, and cinchona estates. Our guide showed a coconut estate of 500 acres belonging to M.S. Ramaiah, known to us.

The barren nature of the land intensified as we travelled further from the city. I exclaimed at the decay all around to which Rajappa answered by saying that the whites were responsible for turning a very fertile green landscape to what it is today. Soon however massive rocks came into view, redolent of Kurunegala rocks.

Passing three towns and a distance of 120 miles, we came upon a human colony, that displayed a proliferation of mud huts. Hundreds of goats were being led by men. Eighteen miles more to Puttaparthi, and now the roads were much better. The landscape too turned more emerald and balmed our eyes. Even forests emerged. Now we came to a junction adorned by a concrete arch. It just loomed before us as a mighty spectre and on it were visible the symbols of all religions i.e. the Dhamma Chakra, Crescent, and Cross. The English words ‘Prashanthi Nilayam’ too were engraved on it. Time was about 6.30 p.m. as we drove under the arch.

Now we were driving through a vast melange of new and old buildings constructed with good craftmanship. They were universities and schools as the name boards testified. Far away we could see a beautiful Taj Mahal style building coming up. Rajappa Setti said that it was a new building.

Now we drove on and on and according to Rajappa, we had come to the boundary of the ashram premises. We drove right and entered through a gate, where many vehicles were already thronging the space.

We removed our footwear and entered the ashram full of white clad devotees, all seated and in deep concentration, with their eyes transfixed on the ashram. Now again from there I could see a whole city sprouting. One of these buildings in that city, I later learnt was the ‘Poorna Chandra Mandir’ a resting Hall where 15,000 could reside at one time.

We sat among the devotees on mats. There was an amazing silence. Not even a 'hum' sound. The smell of jasmines pervaded the atmosphere. Only the movements of wind murmured in that silence, which again balmed and calmed us. The sun was setting and darkness crawling in.

Now the electric bulbs began spangling like stars. The buildings, the foliage - all lit up. It was a beautiful sight. The devotees' faces too looked like while lotuses. Most of them had the look of Sikhs and were very fair complexioned. (the colour of ivory). Seated in the posture of Padmasana, with hands on their knees their eyes were glued on to the Mandapa. Now a very soft music like bhajan music began to filter in. Then I saw him, Bhagawan Satya Shri Sai Baba on a stage about 100 yards away enthroned on a special chair, swathed in a cloak of red and brown. He sat there, listening to the music, his face aglow with devotion and his hands moving to the tune of the Bhajan.

In ten minutes the music ceased. Everybody stood and some came out of the hall while some others walked in. We went further in but the vision of Bhagawan Sai Baba was no more. We had to be satisfied by seeing a large photograph of him and another photo of his predecessor, Siddhi Sai Baba. According to some, Siddhi is Sai Baba's earlier athma while others said he is an Avatar of the present Sai Baba.

Mr. Kutumba Rao, who worked there helped us to find our night lodgings which were two rooms in a 4-storeyed apartment of 120 rooms. There were many apartments and dormitories. Food is provided from the canteens within which is sex-segregation. Tables and chairs are made of some clay substance and the place is very well kept and exudes an aura of cleanliness like a temple or church. Only two rupees was charged for the vegetarian meal.

After dinner we walked to the town that was an enclave of the memorabilia connected to Sai Baba. No one could smoke there. But in a corner I had a smoke. we came back at 10.00 p.m.

I woke up at 4.00 a.m. had my ablutions and then meditated. After breakfast went inside the toilet and had a smoke clandestinely. Had breakfast at 6.30 a.m. comprising Ittly, wadai and tea.We had to go for Dharsan at 6.00 a.m. I again crept in, smoked, came down with the rest and met Mr. Kutumba Rao.

He took us inside the ashram and seated us in the verandah. Then he informed that Sai Baba was talking to visitors but his choice of whom he talked to, did not depend on schedule but on mere intuition. Hundreds of devotees were already flocking in.

Soon the Bhajan team had begun their prayers. It is extremely melodious singing. As I listened I was confirmed in the axiom that music is a universal language. Some just seem to get into a trance as they listened. I closed my eyes and began meditating. I did not know how long, I was like that till somebody tapped on me. It was Raja.

'Ari, Ari. Swami is coming'.

I looked at the compound, clean and well-swept. Now across it floated in, Swami Sai Baba swathed in a red robe, his gait placid. It was as if a red flower in full bloom was rolling on a green carpet. His face was infused with kindness, love and energy, transpiring his innermost maitree temperament. An intense bhakthi rose within me. Had I any doubt about him, they just dissolved as dew does with the onset of the rising sun. My mental state too became very pure. He had his eyes downcast but later with a smile looked up at the devotees, who genuflected and began touching his feet. Some hung on to his shawl. He blessed everyone with raised hands and sometimes stopped near one or two and talked. Sometimes he created things and gifted. All this I watched from afar. He had circled around all his devotees and then as he came in looked at us who were on the verandah. He looked at me and our eyes were almost trapped. Then he spoke in Telugu and I could discern the word Ceylon. Now he spoke to Rajappa and moved on. Rajappa motioned to me and Rajasekaran to follow him and we went in and sat on the floor facing a seat like an ornate throne. Another five came in. They sat on one side and the women on the other side. The throne was on a blue carpet. Designs with flowers were crafted on to the hands and feet of the chairs that were cushioned with red velvet. A foot stool of about 8 inches height was before the throne like seat.

The Swami now entered the hall and receded into an inner room from where he raised his hand and blessed us. Then he sat on that especial seat. We all sat on the floor. He looked at us almost with love. There was a two yards distance between him and me. Now I saw him clearly for I had seen him only in photographs. The tranquil look on his face was effaced in the photographs. Especially the cascade of hair haloing his face had a clean beauty and enhanced his personality. As he surveyed us with a smiling face the long eyes of his looked like a duo of fish floating in a clean stream.

He began talking with two females who sat in the front row. I got to know that they were two Sinhala women from our country only later. Her talk revealed that one of the two, a fair tall slim middle-aged woman was suffering from some ailment.

'Very painful. Isn't it? Lady. There is no life without pain. That is life.' the Swami said smiling. 'Swami, give me some relief'. The lady used high flown English that revealed she was very educated, and probably living in a foreign country.

The Swami smiled, leant forward and raised his hand vertically. Then he manipulated his palm and fingers in such a way that they looked like a flower with spreading petals. Next he folded his fingers and behold! There cascaded down some kind of holy ash called 'Vibhuthi' (I later learnt). The woman took them into her hands and later she distributed a little of it to each one of us in the room.

I went on watching keenly. As I sat very close I could see everything clearly. There was no way of his having taken them from somewhere as the sleeves of his dress. I never saw him doing any trick like that. So there were no camouflage or black magic. I concluded that the maitree ingrained in him culminated in a powerful mental state that led to such miracles.

The Swami then talked with the other Lankan woman. She too seemed to suffer from some incurable disease and he listened patiently to her talk. He then raised his right hand, folded it, brought it near the woman and stretched out his palm. There was a gold pendant on his palm now. The woman worshipped him, took the pendant and deposited it in her handkerchief. The Swami told her to hang it on her necklace.

Then he went from the hall to another room where an elderly woman and a young couple were summoned to.We were also invited in. Another special room was in that room. I sat before him, but I had no question to ask. Swami looked at me inquiringly and I said, 'Swami, I came to offer to you my personal respects and the respect of our organization and ask your blessings for our services. Please bless us'.

Then he appreciated the Sarvodaya Seva and expressed his good wishes adding that the whole movement was infused with my energy. He told me to go on working with dedication unmindful of luck or ill-luck.

'You are a fighter. Fight with love' he said several times and indicated that the present stature I have achieved is completely due to my self-exertion. Then he intoned, "I bless you" and went on to say that I am always wondering whether I have a heart ailment, but said that I am a very healthy person. Then he lifted three fingers and remarked with laughter, 'Smoking is taboo here. But you have violated that rule thrice'.

I just could not talk. But there was no anger within him.He was laughing.

'But you did it secretively, like a gentleman, but now you realize that you were seen. You are healthy but now and then you get a headache. Relax. Don't get angry. Certain subordinates, friends, bureaucrats sometimes anger you. But don't steam yourself. They come and go.You are always there. That place needs you.'

Now he began talking with Rajappa in Telugu. Rajappa had told me that Sai Baba has divine sight and now I knew it to be true. Swami again began talking.

'Don't let politicians disturb you. They are temporary powered beings. Majority of them do not have spiritual power. They are stage heros and practical zeros. Many of your politicians have invited me over. But I declined. I lead a very frugal life. I am surviving on a very simple meal and a glass of water today. My needs are very very simple'

He went on,

'Man is speedily travelling towards his decline, which he should stop. We must create awareness of this dilemma and guide them. It is our duty. We cannot live without modern science and technology, but they do not complete human life. Western science is a horse's hoof and creates an incomplete social order. But the spiritual science we follow is a complete circle. Science seeks to reach the skies, but we are on a search of this (he points at the heart). Examine our youths' lives. School life has become a lovers' paradise. We should try to build our schools and universities to counteract this tendency. An education without a spiritual basis does not bring desired results. Animals act on some reasons and seasons, a trait that humans lack today. Every human of whatever level should be service-oriented. Work is like a pooja, work is worship. It develops wisdom, ensures health and other progress plus self progress. The propensity of the human to ignore virtues is increasing very tragically. Everybody is after wealth. For what is wealth? Is it for kindness and love? No. To buy vehicles, jewellery and land. We should all work to fight this malaise. The poor is suffused with wants while rich has most of them fulfilled. Our desires keep on increasing and make even our thoughts sinful.'

Now he spoke to the educated female next to him, 'I advise you, sister, do away with your fondness for ornate dress and for jewellery. Get used to plain living. Help others. Then all your ailments would cease. No disease ails you. But greed has made you ill.'

He went on talking like this, all of which I cannot remember now. I could not discern a difference between what he talked and Buddhist philosophy. Much more than the miracles he performed, I liked his simplicity and frugal nature. His ideas were all "Buddhistic".

Many regard Sai Baba as an avatar of Vishnu. He says 'I have come to perpetuate the Dhamma in the world'. After my meeting with him I left the place in a very relaxed mood. Never could I forget that Bharatha tour. I remember a western writer named Howard Merfort quoting a saying of Sai Baba in a book of his.

'Develop truth and maitree. Don't ask for them. They will just come to you. If you want to solve the riddle of self, rid yourself of your weaknesses and sins. Till the mind is at rest be silent'.

Sai Ram!

After my meeting with Shri Satya Sai Baba on October 6, 1982 after my religious rites I used to confer merit on him and pray. "Let him be healthy enough to serve the world more". Even later I met him thrice. But I spoke to him only at the first meeting. Once in a dream and then in a crisis he helped me twice.

My mentor is Lord Buddha. My dhamma is His Eightfold Path.Hence I do not need any other help but the help of the Triple Gem. But conferring merit on a person like Sai Baba and honouring him, I feel could never taint my devotion to Buddhism.

Being unjustly critical of people is the characteristic of foolish people. Those who criticise Sai Baba belong to this calibre. They do it for the sake of criticising. We are incomplete humans and have no right to pass judgement on great men like Sathya Shri Sai Baba.

He dispenses consolation to people and guides them. Helps patients and the lonely and helpless. Infuses spiritual values into education. Puts up hospitals, schools, universities. These alone make me put him up on a pedestal.

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Jaffna before the outburst

Photo 173 -
Dr. Dhammika Bibile

We exerted ourselves to the optimum to avert the ethnic crisis erupted in 1981-1982 from developing into a bloody debacle. One of the most significant procedures was to hold Santhi Sena camps in South and North, accommodating groups of the two races.

Though I attended many of these camps, foreign involvements deterred me from visiting the camp under discussion. Dr. Dhammika Bibile, who led this camp as a very earnest Sarvodaya worker submitted me this report an evidence of the Sarvodaya effort to avert the crisis. It also transpires the social milieu of Jaffna during the pre-ethnic strife days of July 1983.

Shanthi Sena camp (3) March 3, 1982

To take part in this camp, I had decided to go with Mr. Chandrasena and the rest. But an army head known to me warned me not to go as the situation there had turned dangerous. But I could not change my decision and went to Jaffna by the 11.50 train. Engine trouble delayed the train at Maligawatte, yet we reached the Sarvodaya Centre at Pungudutivu by about 9.30 p.m. without encountering any mishaps on the way.

At the family gathering that night we charted the next day's programme. Next day Brigadier Cyril Ranatunga, Army Brigadier in charge of the North opened the camp after lighting the lamp and then made a valuable speech. Mr. Chandrasena and

Photo 174 -
The Shanthi Sena group led by Mr. Chandrasena leaving
Moratuwa station enroute to Jaffna

Thirunavukarasu made the introductory speeches. I made the speech scheduled for Mr. Ariyaratne. This was the first speech I made after receiving my doctorate and I consider it an honour to the Sarvodaya Movement and to its leader.

Brigadier Ranatunga stated that he was much impressed by Sarvodaya work that could help in removing ethnic strife and that motivated him to attend this ceremony. The ordinary citizen lived in fear of the Tiger movement and the army and all future work was directed of removing this fear. Army is payed by the state not to harass people but help them. If some crisis arises army should be informed and they would immediately help. The tragic situation at present should end. Sarvodaya should help the army and also help disseminate this message, he requested.

Destruction of the Tiger movement and helping the public were his only aims and the destruction was inevitable in the case of the absence of an alternative, he added. I felt him to be very patient, intelligent and a humble officer and that he was sure to help our ventures.

Now was my turn to speak. I said that the Sarvodaya message acts as a panacea for all human evils and ensure peace and prosperity for the whole world. It helped man to rise by his own endeavours and to help. I also focussed on the need for racial camaraderie and said that the service expected of the Shanthi Sena camp was indeed a challenge. Mr. Thirunavukarasu translated the speech into Tamil and it was taped.

I also dwelt on these issues. How did human society get ruptured? How was the social structure at its inception? I explained the later evolution and then the decline. Now the liberating force, was Sarvodaya alone.

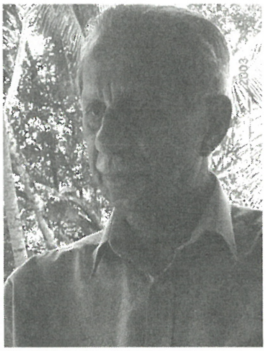

Photo 175 -
Brigadier Cyril Ranatunga

Now after the lecture, group work began, where an issue arose. It was good for the Tamils and Sinhalese to work together. Thirunavukarasu said but sexually there should be segregation. After solving that issue he made his speech on the rural life of Jaffna, highlighting following facts. Jaffna village is a specially structured unit. It exists on a self-sufficient pattern built on the tri-basis of village, religion and agriculture. The typical rural life of the Jaffna peninsula is capsuled only in the villages, that however got tainted with foreign invasions.

Yet foreign graduates when they come to study rural Jaffna life have recourse to our villages. The life they lead makes them happy and satisfied.

As the Tamil poet, Pungthungathar has shown the aesthetic sense of the Jaffna man is very high. Simplicity a necessary feature of human life is still manifest in Jaffna villages. Education was a sensitive factor of this. From very early times the educational standards of Jaffna were high. Even the old order of education resting on teacher-student relationship was exemplary. Teacher was the most respected person in the village. Religious affiliations and teacher respect played a prominent part. The villagers used the most necessary things only. For example the verti and salvar the males wore served many purposes. There was no habit of buying dresses through out the year. But the women buy special dresses for weddings that were used for occasions too. So there was much in common between Jaffna rural life and Sarvodaya.

The ancient Jaffna cloth was manufactured in Jaffna villages. This prowess of Jaffna villagers made the demand very high. Jaffna food is selected both for taste and nourishment. They try to produce their own food. All Jaffna gardens are fenced since the vegetables and green leaves are grown in home plots. There are particular productions in different areas. Then sharing begins. Visitors are treated hospitably and are given indigenous products on departure. Very good meals are supplied to visitors.

The Jaffna people are very keen to preserve a clean environment. So they plant trees often. If water is asked for they will give an alternative drink and even if very poor, visitors are treated very hospitably. Many enjoy a long span of life since the health conditions are very good. Food is always cooled in clay vessels. No metal vessels are ever used, as they are harmful to health. Flowers are grown for the fragrance they issue, that gets infused into the air they breathe. Sandalwood is often used as this is an energiser to life sustenance. They daub themselves with sandalwood powder and sandalwood liquid. This is the ancient custom based on scientific thinking. Sandalwood further counters against heat.

Houses are built to adapt to the climate. New material in the area is used as well as the community labour, which was the Gandhian precept for house building. Both aversion of heat and cold are taken into reckoning. Many sleep on the floor and even sit on the floor, practices conducive to health. Many cultural traits of Jaffna are aligned to health. Kavadi dance is in itself conducive to health. So is ash daubing. The acupuncture done in kovils is also hygienic. Even foreigners realize their value. He further said that non-violence and selflessness pervade Jaffna society and that the village life rotates around the kovil while religion controls life and caste system is so eroded that Brahmins and outcastes work together. The lower castes can visit kovils today.Though caste system exists here and there inter-caste marriages are common now.

The noon family gathering, evening lectures and night family gathering followed trailed by a lecture by Mr. Vivekananda, who gave a very graphic account of Sinhala rural life.

He polarised the Sinhala rural society into the large family and small family, the first comprising relations and friends, who sometimes share the same Vasagam (Gename). The members have various ways of helping each other as funeral aid societies and other societies. No contests are held for elections. About 17 families live in a village. Small families are different. Built on a colony system, no inter help and family help exist. So they survive independently and face more difficulties. So they need collective help. No uncontested leadership generates. Hence imposed associations are required. Here Sarvodaya can enter and help them. Language too was discussed. After this I had a discussion for youth, giving pragmatic and psychological advice and solutions for problems that veered on methodology.

Recently Mr. S. Narayanaswami, a voluntary worker of the UN explained very simply how psychology can be used to help rural work. The rural society assumed two forms i.e. spiritual and practical and has problems regarding housing and health. They like to root in their own villages, and are too scared to venture out. Villagers have to be rid of their superstitions too. Psychological solutions have to be searched for solving rural problems. The one who introduces reforms should himself act as a member of the village, even dress in the village style. He should seek the advice of the villagers too and act co-operatively.

Villagers do not have much faith in officers and officialdom. Ultra bureaucracy they reject. Voluntary service should not be limited to a specific time. Villagers should be educated with care. This Sarvodaya is the most fitting body to lead a village. It has a good psychological basis too.

Now we broke into groups and left for 5 villages. We were received with warmth and treated well. At 3.00 p.m. we listened to Mr. Narayanaswami's speech.We had travelled very far on foot to Sarvodaya villages and now night was approaching. Three groups came back in vehicles. The rest of the programme too went on successfully, the travel on foot, hospitality, the non-opposition pervading. It was obvious that the whole Jaffna peninsula was receptive to Sarvodaya. Even the Sinhala-Tamil amity was clearly manifest.

Photo 176 -
Mr. Ratnam M.P.

At Punguduthivu, the lecture by Kayts MP Mr. Ratnam was after 9.30 p.m. This was since the various receptions by the villagers delayed our coming making him wait at the Sarvodaya centre for 2 1/2 hours. But his speech on our Shanthi Sena work was disturbing and Mr. Chandrasena mediated and solved a crisis.

This is Mr. Thirunavukarasu's translation of Mr. Ratnam's speech.

"This Shanthi Seva Movement began at a very critical phase in the country. No good can be spawned minus a peaceful and spiritual awakening. As the poet Valluvar said, before a country can be diverted to a good path Dhamma should enter politics even Sarvodaya cannot help a country otherwise. I have discussed this with Mr. Ariyaratne when he last came to Jaffna and he accepted it and promised to bring the issue before the public and the educated and solve this problem. I read his speech at the launching of the Shanthi Sena programme and was impressed.

But neither Sarvodaya nor any other movement can solve the crisis that has now erupted. For that every citizen should work like a member of Shanthi Sena.

All citizens should have equal rights to live and prosper. Till one faction keeps another faction suppressed it cannot be done. Even in the south there is disparity between the rich and poor, between the powerful and powerless. In the north too it is the same. I think Sarvodaya is faced with numerous problems revolving around poverty and the social disciminations. The Tamils have never worked against the Sinhalese and Buddhism. All privileges enjoyed by the Sinhalese race should be the patrimony of the Tamil race too. But where is the guarantee of security and access to law enjoyed by the Sinhalese with regard to Tamils? It does not exist ever since the Sinhala became the language of the country. Between 1944 and 1956 both Sinhala and Tamil were state languages. But Bandaranaike made Sinhala the only state language thus generating this crisis.

We questioned this dilemma in 1955. Then Dr. Colvin R. de Silva said in the parliament one country two languages. One language two countries. I say, both languages should be equally developed. Both languages should be state languages. This is not a declaration against the Sinhalese. When administration is done in both languages, it is convenient for Tamils and facilitates peoples' participation in administration. I explained this to Mr. Ariyaratne.

The Tamils do not know Sinhala. The Police write their entries in Sinhala leading to mal-handling of law. It is wrong to get Tamils to sign what is written in Sinhala. We do not accept administration done in Sinhala. We should use our own language in administration.

We are aware of the new constitution drafted by the present government which says the administration of the north through the Tamil language is accepted as a policy. But it remains only a policy and is not executed. Rajadurai MP does not know Sinhala and he concurred with my idea and stated in 1978 he would put this plan in action. On February 26, 1982 I again made a plea. I told Mr. Rajadurai, if this is not executed he should resign.

Mr. Ratnam further went on to say that since the elections were in the horizon, government is silent on the matter. So not only Mr. Rajadurai but the government are liars. Since the promises have not been honoured trouble may arise, specially youth unrest.

Not only the language issue but in various other matters as un-employment Tamils have been discriminated. Teachers have been appointed to Sinhala schools by the education minister but not to Tamils schools. Even children are now opposed to government due to this. Ratio-wise 20 Sinhala children have a teacher while 30 Tamil children have their teacher. We need 4556 more teachers. Government should look at the issue neutrally. If it cannot the regime should be handed to us. It is just a request.

The present government has not taken pains to do its duty by us. So we go on our own. The Shanthi Sena work cannot play a role here. Since earlier I had refused to ally myself with it due to this factor, I just came here to give this message since many have come here. I did not make a political speech, but I said the government has not solved any of our problems. So the only solution is separation. If within a family there is a rift those subject to discrimination should leave it.

Photo 177 -
Mr.I.K.G. Chandrasena,
Director of Shanthisena

Now we are going to do exactly that. For 30 years we have been listening to false promises, so we intend to breakaway now. We should be thankful that Shanthi Sena has dared to come here despite this situation. But this is a political issue."

Mr. Ratnam ended his speech by saying that the people of the south have nothing against the North and vice-versa. This speech caused a stir in the audience. No one applaused. Some were in a mood to question him, but Mr. Chandrasena mediated and made a timely speech.

He said that Sarvodaya is a non political body that worked above man-made barriers. It is a humanitarian philosophy, working on the basis of compassion. The racial and linguistic issues have put the country into a turmoil, which issues should be resolved at the Janatha level.

Dr. Ariyaratne was a seeker for resolving them through Ahimsa. It was evident that Mr. Ratnam spoke with a fervour for his own community and religion and culture and presented the dilemma faced by the Tamils frankly. After the night family gathering we dispersed.

Two special lectures were held the next day in which I did not present myself. I monitored a discussion. After Messrs. Vivekananda and Ravindra left to Colombo Mr. Chandrasena myself and others led the activities.

I delivered two other lectures too that was allotted to Dr. Ariyaratne and held various discussions. I focused on how the workers should lead the community activities, gaining popular support and using psychological means. Next I awarded the certificates to those who were due to leave to their villages.

I must thank Mr. Chandrasena for his intelligent and patient role. Some of the youth in our party were headstrong but we disciplined them later. But that a good number acted irresponsibly should be mentioned. Two severe incidents took place. One was that a Sarvodaya malli try to attack Mr. Yogeswaran with a hammer and a stone. Another was a Tamil youth misconstruing a joke made by two Sinhala boys taking to blows. Some were very lukewarm in taking orders. Hence Chandrasena had to exert himself much.

The day before we were to return Mr. Thirunavukarasu took us to visit Naga Deepa by a motor boat. There were about hundred in the group and Mr. Thirunavukarasu handled the motor boat alone. We were given a treat by the principal of the Nagadipa school, where at a gathering Shanthi Sena was adulated. We returned at about 10 p.m.

Almost every day during our Jaffna sojourn we were very busy till about midnight in training and executing our programmes. We also got a good exposure to the Tamil way of living, their attitudes etc.

The Jaffna Sarvodaya Centre is very well disciplined and work is done with dedication. The Sarvodaya Bank is of a very high standard and maintained 14 trade stalls. This centre further attains to maintain the purity of Hindu culture. But few were aware of Shanthi Sena. However a ceremony conferring blessing on Shanthi Sena was held in a nearby Kovil and we established cordial relations with the people.

We even travelled along the streets of Jaffna. No one seems to bother though they knew we were Sinhalese. We bought things we fancied and had a look at Nallur Kovil from outside. Then we returned to Colombo.

In Jaffna we saw neither an army nor police officer but on our way we saw them, that too at Elephant Pass and in between. We had tea at Vavuniya centre and lunch at Anuradhapura. On the way back a suitcase fell on a girl's head and we had to hospitalise her and wait till she was okay. This was due to headstrong ways.

The tour infused us with much experience, especially practical experience. Out of this gamut of experience I have gathered some suggestions for the future that I list below for your consideration.

1. Shanthi Sena should be a permanent unit.
2. A formal education should be given to its members.
3. Only responsible minded and talented youth should be taken in.
4. Village-wise and city-wise when members are recruited character, abilities and responsibility should be considered at the screening.
5. Only those with experience know-how and intelligence should be taken in.
6. Selection should be done at a neutral level.
7. Majority of Shanti Sena should be trained so that they can end up in Police force, Army and Navy.
8. They should have a good knowledge of Sarvodaya.
9. Awareness of Shanthi Sena has to be created in schools, state and private organisations.
10. Training in administration of students should be given to teachers.
11. Courses about Shanthi Sena should be conducted among school children.
12. After training Shanthi Sena personnel, income generating avenues should be found for them.
13. A policy should be promulgated for national unity.
14. This unity should be started at national, political, religious and legal levels.
15. A process should be begun to dilute party and other disputes.
16. Advise should be given to state and indicate a peace maintaining unit or department or ministry.
17. Under this all dissensions should be attended to.
18. Leadership in this area should be given to Sarvodaya.
19. When teaching the first part of the Shanthi Sena Syllabus, lectures should veer towards a scientific basis.
20. Note-taking should be encouraged.
21. Training in practical work should be expanded.

22. Shanthi Sena trainees should be trained in psychology, ethics religion, philosophy, science, Buddhism and essence of other religions.
23. Further general knowledge, practical knowledge and training in Police and security measures should be infused in them.
24. Shanthi Sena campaign should zoom to a global level.
25. A peace keeping campaign at election time should be initiated.
26. A few of Shanthi Sena members should be given training abroad to expand this programme universally.

Yours sincerely,
Dhammika Bibile.

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The Faded Dhamma Lamp of Ruwanpura

I dedicated the first volume of Bava Thanha to the name of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The second volume I dedicate to the name of Ven. Henpitagedara Gnanaseeha Thero. On July 31st Friday, 1982 he took his final farewell from us.

He was the beaconlight for many young monks stranded after Pirivena and University education. As the head of Pathakade Sarvodaya Bhikku Training Institute he worked with a remarkable dedication. At Pathakade he roamed many a path giving guidance to the ordinary man.

Despite all this community work, he indulged in writing and dozens are his manuscripts written in Sinhala, Pali and Sanksrit but not yet published. His pupil, Ven. Kongastenne Ananda Bhikku expends much energy over their publication assisted by Vishva Lekha.

In piety the Gnanaseeha Thero reached the optimum and as his erudition so did his humility. Finally he became like a child in this respect. Never knowing misery and hypocricy he relished self-ctiticism. If somebody criticised the Maha Sangha he used to quip, “They are our company aththo”. Finally he used to sleep on a wooden plank.

Taking part in the Sarvodaya Executive Council meeting held on July 25, 1982, at Moratuwa Damsak Mandira, he suggested that a Dhamma Sangayana should be held soon to resolve the conflicts that had arisen among the Clergy. For this erudite Buddhist scholars local and foreign should be invited and

Photo 178 -
When the sacrosanct cortege arrived at Damsak Mandira

Sarvodaya should play the pivotal role.

At this meeting he developed a distate for food and also a foot ache and we made arrangements to send him to a specialist. But later we learnt that he had gone to SLBC instead. He had gone there after 4 years and according to Chitrananda Abeysekera had said:

"I came today to preach a new bana" and actually that he preached new Bana, the whole island is aware of now. Actually his dhamma was based on death and re-birth so intensive as to form a core of a thesis. May be he knew he would pass away soon. The speech taped that day was broadcast on the day of his cremation.

After this having met the specialist he had returned to Pathakade. After I visited him there, I saw a diseased prelate and requested him to meet a doctor in Colombo. When he had got worse later he was admitted to a private hospital.

Having entrusted the Thero to Neetha's care, I went out on a tour of Kuliyapitiya, Anuradhapura and Jaffna. The night I spent at Kuliyapitiya I dropped a cup and a saucer there which broke. Having felt this inauspicious, I phoned Neetha who said Thero was subject to medical examination and was not very bad. That day again I dropped the cup of morning tea. So without going to Jaffna I came back and visited the patient. Prof. Dharmadasa was carrying on the check-ups and the Thero complained about dis-

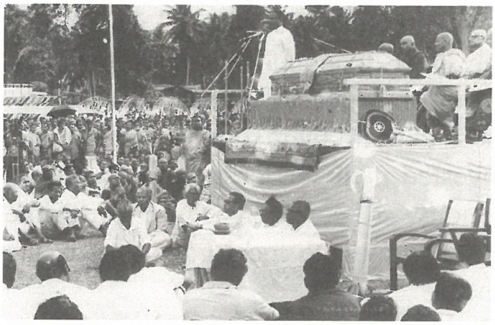

Photo 179 -
PM addresses the crowd attending the cremation rites

comforts in the tummy. That was on the 31st. I came home and as I switched off the light the telephone rang. Sumana--gala Bhikku informed that that the Thera's condition was unsatisfactory. Soon I went to hospital with Neetha. Now he sat on the bed and began talking with pain.

I told him to lie down and talk and requested a nurse to summon Prof. Dharmadasa. Everybody addressd me as 'Our Sir'. The Thero said if 'Our Sir' wants me to lie down, I will do it. I am not in fear of Maraya (the demon of death).

Podi Hamuduruvo and I held him by hands and feet while he went on breathing loud. I got very emotional and my reaction cannnot be described in words.

That was the exit of one of the greatest prelates of this century. There is no sign of a substitute being born in the near future. That is not manifest in horizon, a fact many would condone.

Before the cortege moved on to Pathakada for the last rites it stopped at Dhamsak Mandira where we paid our honours. Induru Uttrarananda Maha Thero, Head of Sri Lanka Ramannya Sect, Madihe Pannaseeha Maha Nayaka Thero Head of the Amarapura sect, and several other distinguished personnel of the laiety and clergy took part in the funeral perahera that wended its way to Pathakade. The cremation took place in the esplanade of Ratnapura UC.

All Maha Nayakas, PM R. Premadasa and Mr. Maithripala Senanayake delivered the funeral orations and Henpitagedara Gnanavasa Thero made the Anumodana (merit conferment) speech.

This is my Vote of Thanks:

By leave of the most Ven. Mahanayaka Theras, Hon. Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, all those gathered here.

On behalf of Cremation Committee I speak and inform that we are about to pay our last respects to a great person who is born once in 1000 years. First of all I must thank the lakhs of mourners who have congregated here to share their sorrow. Then I must thank the following who invested their labour, money, wits and advice to make this ceremony so ceremonial i.e. to Prime Minister, all high personnel and state and local government, the people of Ratnapura and others.

This jewel of prelate born in the western province and polished in the Sabaragamuva province will be cremated physically alone but the glitter of his work will radiate throughout the world if we all strive to ensure it happen. Let us resolve that the honour due to him should begin today and we will do so without hesitation.

For this first we must undertake the pledge of completing the mission he began ie. that of making the whole world realise that pure Buddhism is what we have in our island.

Secondly we envisage a Dhamma Sangayana to bring about a concensus among laity and clergy about the above fact. The great sermon he preached on this matter we have just heard and it is published in the Davasa Newspaper fully, and was also distributed as a booklet today. So we must all contribute to this labour.

We should also assist and patronise the religious and national institutes put up at Pathakada and Eheliyagoda. Further we should help the 1500 or more young Bhikkus whom he trained to carry on the flag of Buddhism in various parts of the country. Further under the patronage of Prof. Henpitagedara Gnanawasa steps should be taken to publish the late prelate's manuscripts.

Then we must all put a Commemorative building in his honour to give an idea of his greatness to the up coming generation of bhikkus.

This is the five-fold plan of honour I envisage. Let him be born again and again in our midst to render his service to our island.

May this historical day signal the dawn of a great era! Let him preserve our lives, so that we can fulfill these aims!

May the Nayaka Thero attain Nibbana!

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The Community Leadership Assembly held in America

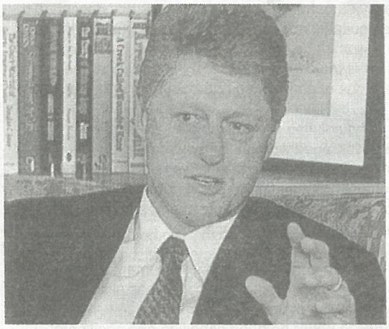
Photo 180 -
With Mr. Fasrul Abed

I took part in a special programme held in March 1983 in America. It was special since 17 pioneers of development strategies from various countries along with 17 pioneers from America took part in it.

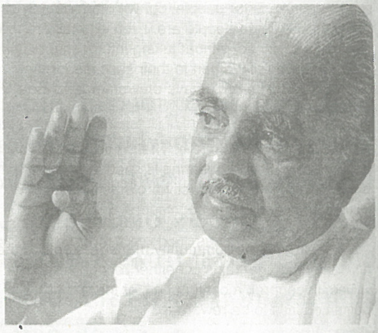
The trio who organized this were Mr. Nathan Gray, who began Oxfam of America, Dr. Dana Meadows, a member of the Club of Rome and author of "Limits to Growth" (a very popular book) and Prof. Mary King, member of the Martin Luther King Foundation, later Directress of the American Peace Corp. Sessions were held in New York, Washington and Boston and the main session at Little Rock of Arkansas State inhabited mostly by Blacks. It was at Little Rock I met the Governor of Arkansas, Mr. Bill Clinton and his wife and Andrew Young. Clinton later became the President of the USA. Many community leaders who later became luminaries in the area of community welfare, I met at this assembly. One such was Mr. Chandra Prasad Bhatt, head of the Chipko Movement who mobilised specially the female force in India in a vast tree-perserving campaign. Chipko means "Embracing the Tree". Women were made to embrace trees to prevent them being cut forcing the government to initiate apt measures.

Sarvodaya Leader's Message to U.S. President

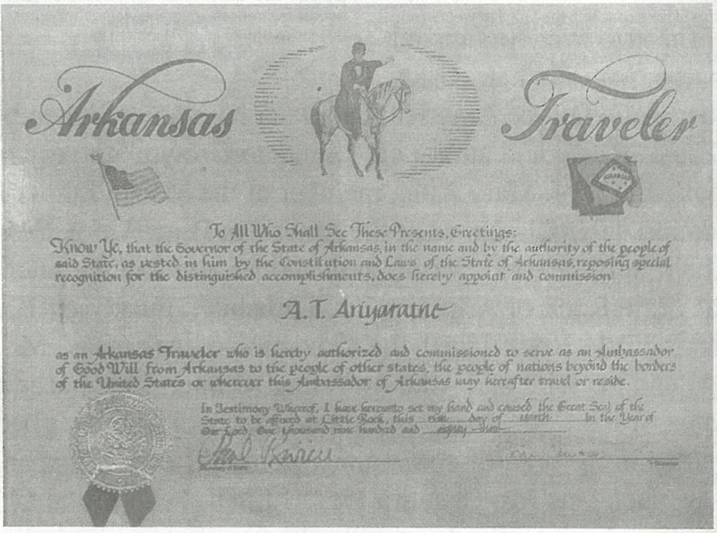
When in March 1983 Dr A T Ariyaratne met Mr Bill Clinton at Little Rock, Arkansas, the Sarvodaya leader was appointed and commissioned as an Arkansas Traveler in recognition of his distinguished accomplishments. Recently Dr Ariyaratne has been watching Governor Clinton's rise to the U.S. Presidency with renewed hopes for a better world. Excerpts from correspondence before and after Bill Clinton's election as 42nd President of the United States:



U.S. President Bill Clinton



Sarvodaya leader Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne



Arkansas Traveler

To All Who Shall See These Presents, Greetings:

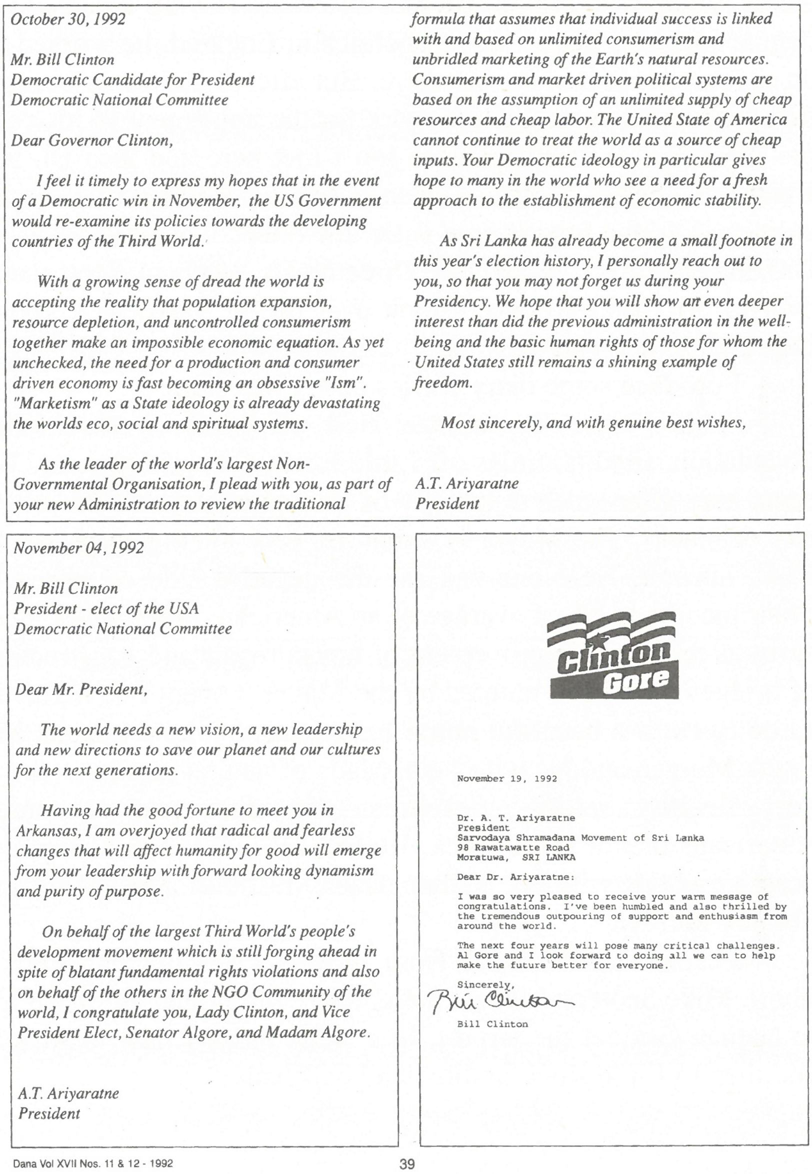
Know Ye, that the Governor of the State of Arkansas, in the name and by the authority of the people of said State, as vested in him by the Constitution and Laws of the State of Arkansas, reposing special recognition for the distinguished accomplishments, does hereby appoint and commission

A. T. Ariyaratne

as an Arkansas Traveler who is hereby authorized and commissioned to serve as an Ambassador of Good Will from Arkansas to the people of other states, the people of nations beyond the borders of the United States or wherever this Ambassador of Arkansas may hereafter travel or reside.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State to be affixed at Little Rock, this [illegible] day of March in the Year of Our Lord, One thousand nine hundred and eighty-three

Photo 181 -
The titular rank conferred by Mr. Bill Clinton



October 30, 1992

Mr. Bill Clinton
Democratic Candidate for President
Democratic National Committee

Dear Governor Clinton,

I feel it timely to express my hopes that in the event of a Democratic win in November, the US Government would re-examine its policies towards the developing countries of the Third World.

With a growing sense of dread the world is accepting the reality that population expansion, resource depletion, and uncontrolled consumerism together make an impossible economic equation. As yet unchecked, the need for a production and consumer driven economy is fast becoming an obsessive "Ism". "Marketism" as a State ideology is already devastating the worlds eco, social and spiritual systems.

As the leader of the world's largest Non-Governmental Organisation, I plead with you, as part of your new Administration to review the traditional formula that assumes that individual success is linked with and based on unlimited consumerism and unbridled marketing of the Earth's natural resources. Consumerism and market driven political systems are based on the assumption of an unlimited supply of cheap resources and cheap labor. The United State of America cannot continue to treat the world as a source of cheap inputs. Your Democratic ideology in particular gives hope to many in the world who see a need for a fresh approach to the establishment of economic stability.

As Sri Lanka has already become a small footnote in this year's election history, I personally reach out to you, so that you may not forget us during your Presidency. We hope that you will show an even deeper interest than did the previous administration in the well-being and the basic human rights of those for whom the United States still remains a shining example of freedom.

Most sincerely, and with genuine best wishes,

A.T. Ariyaratne
President

November 04, 1992

Mr. Bill Clinton
President - elect of the USA
Democratic National Committee

Dear Mr. President,

The world needs a new vision, a new leadership and new directions to save our planet and our cultures for the next generations.

Having had the good fortune to meet you in Arkansas, I am overjoyed that radical and fearless changes that will affect humanity for good will emerge from your leadership with forward looking dynamism and purity of purpose.

On behalf of the largest Third World's people's development movement which is still forging ahead in spite of blatant fundamental rights violations and also on behalf of the others in the NGO Community of the world, I congratulate you, Lady Clinton, and Vice President Elect, Senator Algore, and Madam Algore.

A.T. Ariyaratne
President

Clinton
Gore

November 19, 1992

Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne
President
Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka
98 Rawatawatte Road
Moratuwa, SRI LANKA

Dear Dr. Ariyaratne:

I was so very pleased to receive your warm message of congratulations. I've been humbled and also thrilled by the tremendous outpouring of support and enthusiasm from around the world.

The next four years will pose many critical challenges. Al Gore and I look forward to doing all we can to help make the future better for everyone.

Sincerely,
Bill Clinton

Bill Clinton

Dana Vol XVII Nos. 11 & 12 - 1992 39

Photo 182 -
Two letters sent to Mr.Bill Clinton and replies received

Mr. Fazrul Abed too I met here, the founder of Bangladesh Rural Action Committee, BRAC, an NGO. Having received his degree from the School of Economics in England, he worked as an accountant in a company there. But after Bangladesh became independent he came back to work for the upliftment of his people. Prof. Yunus of Bangladesh too I met here and also Dr. Ela Bhatt who began a service agency for the welfare of Gujarati women. A friend I made here is Dr. Joe Short, Executive Director Oxfam, America. Its Project Director Dr. Micheal Scott came over to Sri Lanka to have a look over of our Sarvodaya. Today they are my life-long pals.

I produce some diary entries of my tour here.

'This is the Conference Hall of Winthrop Rockfeller Foundation, sited 60 miles off Little Rock, City of Arkansas. We came here after lunch at the city of Memphis (pop. 1427). It is a city of blacks. The Mayor is a mature, very intelligent person, a black himself. Here one can see the negative side of America. Their income is 1/5 of average of an American. Many relief measures as drainage, improvement of house repair and construction of bridges have been mooted by the Mayor. I spent two nights in Little Rock in a beautiful house belonging to a kind couple, Mr. Frank Morgan and his wife Jean. Made of natural granite, it has a very healthy setting. Seventeen outsiders and seventeen Americans met at Little Rock. I took part in TV and newspaper programs along with Mr. Nathan, Dana Meadows, Mary King and Tommy McRay.

I came to Little Rock from Boston. I had dinner with Joe Short, Mike Scott and others there. Ruth, Mc Logen entrusted me to Nathan Gray at the airport. In a Delta plane I flew to Atlanta and then to Little Rock in three and half hours.'

178

How Black July began

July 23rd 1983 is one of the saddest days in Sri Lankan history. The worst holocaust took place that day. The day came to be known as Black Friday. Ruler then was President J.R. Jayewardene.

I had a feeling that what the leaders of UNP wanted was to get members of the Tamil United Liberation Front over to their side. Then only a few SLFP members would be left in the opposition. To incite them for this, that a plan was afoot to destroy Tamil power without taking of lives, was in the air. But 3 days prior to plans taking off the holocaust began.

News spread that 13 bodies of Sinhala soldiers killed in a land mind blast had been put in nine polythene bags and brought to Kanatta and were about to be buried in secret. A group of soldiers from Homagama camp alerted to this came in civil uniforms and had stopped the burials.

At about 5 a.m. my friend L.H. Piyasena informed me that the destruction of Tamil boutiques had begun. I drove immediately to Ward Place. But the Security Forces guarding the President's house prevented my advancing further. I noticed how the shops at Punchi Borella and Maradana were burning while the Police just looked on. Then I went to Nalanda College, headed by Mr. Dharma Gunasinghe. He was thick in measures to protect the school children and hostellers. I phoned the President and pleaded him to enforce curfew, since an irretrievable damage would be done otherwise to our country. His reply insinuated no alacrity to do so. My doubts were confirmed. So I loaded my children and

Photo 183 -
Refugee camp at Ratmalana air port

other children along the Moratuwa road into my van and through flames of fire came home. I just could not believe my eyes. Vehicles with passengers were being ignited and the latter burnt to death. Dragging females to backyards and burning them, looting of luxury goods as radios and TV sets were other acts I witnessed. Many of the offenders came in government vehicles. They used files to enter houses. The deadly drama I felt was well organised.

As I passed Mt. Lavinia and Ratmalana I saw some political leaders waving and egging on the offenders. I was indignant at the sight. As I passed Lunawa junction I could see even community leaders thick in the looting that had begun.

I kept the vehicle at home, got on to a bicycle and spoke to some of the mighty and warned that these crimes would boomerang on us. They asked me whether I am siding the Tamils and helpless I returned and cried. Just then somebody entered my room. It was Sisira Navaratna malli.

I asked him, cannot India intervene?

The phone rang. That was Piyasoma Medis malli. He said that the wounded and refugees are being carried to Ratmalana airport and asked me to go there. Already we had given refuge to 7 Tamils at Damsak Mandira. I along with my daughter Charika, Neetha, Mrs. Leela Jayasekera and a few others went to Ratmalana Airport in an ambulance with nursing equipment. It

Photo 184 -
Refugee camp at Ratmalana airport

was full of Tamils already. Three Police Officers kept watch with guns in their hands.

"Are there bullets inside?", I asked. "Only one, Sir."

Just then the Officer in Charge of the Airport and the ASP of the area came there. Have they got instructions to control the situation, I asked. None they replied. We saw thugs congregating near the fence beyond. I told the Police officers to show their guns and frighten them and they obeyed. I left others there and drove to boutiques of Galkissa and Ratmalana and asked for food from them (braving criticism too) and distributed it among the refugees. We pushed some small planes and prepared space for the refugees to lodge but some families opted to stay in their own vehicles, refusing to stay with low caste Tamils. I scolded them saying even in a situation of life and death you are only conscious of so called your high caste.

By 3 or 4 p.m. the airport was full of refugees. We had summoned our voluntary workers there. Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali too had come there. I suggested getting food from the habour for the refugees. He promised to do so and the food we got was distributed. Mrs. Sunethra Ranasinghe too had come.

We also faced a crisis. One of our drivers had left the vehicle, taken the keys and fled. Later when he came to our headquarters I dismissed him. News spread that a Tiger attack on Colombo was imminent and vehicles began moving out of Colombo, even along pavements. Even my family members got caught to the ensuing melee. I came back and was told of the incident by the watcher.

A group of youth had stopped at the gate and asked my second daughter Sadeeva "Are you hiding Tamils here?" She was nine years then and had been playing with other kids and she had answered that there are Tamil aiyas and akkhas inside but that if they are ill-treated it will be over our lives. That is what father said, she had stated. Surprised they had gone away looking for other prey. This is a clear example that if you do not succumb to thuggery that you win.

Photo 185 -
Refugee camp at Ratmalana airport

Photo 186 -
Nine year old Sadeeva,
my daughter

Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya and Mr. Bradman Weerakoon phoned me. Later informed me that a Commissioner-General had been appointed by Government to looked after refugees and they are now housed at Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya and Royal and Thurstan Colleges and asked me to help. I sent our Shanti Sena groups and personally visited all camps. Then I went to Sirimavo Bandaranaike College. I had an experience there. A young man who was stranded in Ratmalana camp had met me there and told me to search for his wife, a dental surgeon. I met her in this college camp. I got her to sit in the front seat of my car and asked her to remove her 'thoodu' but she was unable to remove them. I got her to tie a scarf covering them and drove her to Ratmalana camp. At many places I was stopped but somebody said. "This is Mr. Ariyaratne. Let him go. So I drove on. I handed her to her husband and even helped them to get back to Jaffna.

Never did this Tamil couple express their gratitude to me for what I did risking my life. Racial prejudices and politics are a deadly poison that destroys humanity.

179

Sinhala Buddhists! The Nation now needs your great service

After one whole week of physical and mental fatigue I found some time to pen this. What was I doing? I went to the midst of about more than 8000 people comprising, infants, children, pregnant mothers, men, women, old people - all refugees and did my ordained duty as a Sinhala Buddhist.

I am writing all this in the first person (uttama purusha), so that I can take on the whole responsibility. I belong to a generation of Sinhala Buddhists. I do not own a single non-Buddhist, non-Sinhala relative, nor do I own personal property worth protecting, nor power nor a post that are politically or officially powerful. Yet in calamities created by man alone or in natural calamities there is something that we must step out to preserve. That is the code of Sinhala Buddhist ethics, the stream of mental processes that makes our race outstanding. A true Sinhala Buddhist should strive to preserve them at the cost of his life.

Crimes not perpetrated even by fanatics of the Portuguese race were staged last month before our very eyes. Thugs got one innocent man to get into a tyre and set fire to it. Then a van full of passengers was set aflame. Yet in another place pregnant women, old men, and women begging for their life, were done away with weapons as swords and kris knives. These unprecedented crimes demolished our Buddhist ethics first. The heroes who fully cognizant of our Dhamma law and laws of war and went on to preserve our race and Buddhism lie in their graves, sorrowfully watching the sorry predicament.

It is an easy matter to put the blame on another for their own gains. But I feel the whole elderly generation should bear the sin. To ensure the ridding of the disgrace that we brought upon ourselves for another1000 years we should introspect ourselves.

For the ensuring of narrow political tribal, religious and economic gains should we be participants in the destroyal of human qualities of kindness, truthfulness and justice - the patrimony of Sinhala Buddhists? To deviate from neutrality is against the Buddha's words 'Dammohave Rakkathi Dhammachari'. Should we deviate from the Dhamma path and help to build a society that adulates violence, bribery, corruption? Should we reinforce a party system that ruptures the fabric of the Sinhala race? If we do not indulge in such a train of thought, nothing would be left of the Sinhala race and Buddhism.

We are aware that for the last 28 years a powerful Tamil faction was very active to break up the country into two. When universal franchise was given to this country in 1931, stooges of imperialism opposed it, after devaluing the Buddhist and Hindu ethics. They deliberately began to cultivate Sinhala-Tamil animosity. Suppressing rights of the average citizen they followed a policy of increasing their own privileges by a facade of strengthening minority rights over majority rights. In the 1940 decade they raised a 50-50 cry, then a Federal Government, then a plea for Eelam, and began an anti-national campaign. The final scene was staged by the eruption of Tamil terrorism.

We exerted ourselves trying to clarify this trap to the Sinhalese and to Tamil intellectuals. But finally everything ended up by the loss of lives of our young security personnel and the mayhem created by thugs, looters and narrow minded politicians.

The Sinhala Buddhists should entrust the preservation of the unity of our country to the President, the control of Tigers to the armies and themselves be the guardians and restorers of our own ethics.

They should court the help of Tamil Hindus, Muslims and Christians too for this task. It should done just now. Otherwise for another 1000 years these two would be at loggerheads. Dear

Sinhala Buddhists! A miasma of misery spreads around us. Children, infant, men and women who have lost their spouses, hundreds of helpless adults are living with fear in refugee camps.To experience this misery I spent 5 days in a refugee camp with them, who are completely innocent of the causes that led to this maelstrom of suffering. If we do not wish this situation to backfire on us, now is the time to act.

May all beings be happy!

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne,
a declaration issued on July 30th, 1983.

180

A trip to Jaffna to build bridges

Government had taken steps to ship refugees to Jaffna. I wanted to show my goodwill by going to Jaffna and engaging in some helpful service. The curfew however prevented it. But hoping to avert the island ending up in a bloody pool I was determined to go to Jaffna. When I told my idea to Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya he took it as a joke. But 6 days after the holocaust, I was enroute to Jaffna with cameraman, Premasiri de Silva malli. I drove the jeep. Harsha Kumara Navaratne got in at Anuradhapura. Sabapathi malli who worked in our Nelumkulama camp and other Tamil brothers there who had taken refuge in Vavuniya Sarvodaya centre opted to join us.

No Tamil at that time came beyond Munnuruppu, the city limits of Vavuniya and no Sinhalese went beyond Medawachchiya. The killing of Dr. Rajasunderam and Kuttimani in Welikada Remand Prison had aggravated the situation. Vavuniya was also the centre of PLOTE. So our trip was indeed historical.

Photo 187 -
Being received by the
MPs of Jaffna

Photo 188 -
From L to R - Mr. Yogeswaram, Jaffna MP,
Mr. Thirunavukarasu and Jaffna Mayor

We met army vehicles and Sinhalese leaving the north. We were the only Sinhalese going the reverse way. Army personnel warned us against the 'mad trip'. Among the warners were Capt. Denzil Kobbekaduwa then in charge of Vavuniya-Kilinochchi. But infused with Dhamma thoughts we entered Jaffna. I personally drove the vehicle.

We first entered the Jaffna Kachcheri. The GA was Dr. Devanesan Nesiah. He welcomed us cordially. I phoned Mr. Yogeswaran, Jaffna MP who just could not believe I had come to Jaffna. He turned down my request to come and see us saying that a newspaper correspondent from India was with him. I said that we have reached a critical juncture and reiterated that we should meet. He replied that the North-South bridge is already demolished. I pleaded with him and finally he agreed to meet me at the Kachcheri. Former Vice-Chancellor of Jaffna University, Prof. Sivathamby too was there. He had already founded a Tamil Rehabilitation Service organization, to which army personnel also lent support. It was the 1st Jaffna NGO set up on a racial basis.

From the Kachcheri, Messrs. Yogeswaran and Nesiah and I went on to Kankesanturai. I drove, Nesiah sat in the front seat, and others sat in the middle seat.

We first visited the ship that brought refugees to Kankesanturai. First we went to the pier and then to a nearby school. As we got down in a row were Mr. Amirthalingam, head of TULF, its Chairman Sivasithamparam and MPS Navaratnam and Ratnam. They saw me but looked aside. But the youth came around me and asked me for my autograph on pieces of paper they brought.

I had expected a different reaction. Now the above, observing the youth reaction came and spoke to me. Mr. Sivasithamparam said that his house along Elibank Road has been completely destroyed, while Mr. Amirthalingam stated that since Eelam was the only answer that my overture was of no avail. He strongly asserted the inability of the Tamils to share the same country. I said that hasty decisions would only shed more blood and suggested acting with equanimity.

On a suggestion by Thirunavukarasu who had accompanied us, we came back via Vadukkodai. We entered the Bishop's House near Jaffna College. Bishop Ambalavaner's behaviour filled me with disgust. He aksed whether we are Sinhalese or Tamils. Then on the introductions he concluded that the party comprised both. Then he turned to the Tamils and asked them why they are keeping company with Sinhalese. Then he drew a line on the floor and said with fury.

'We are finished with you. Beyond this line you live. We live on this side".

He did not even ask us to sit down. I pleaded him 'to build the bridge' as he was a religious leader but he refused. We bade him farewell.

I next visited Dr. Rajasunderam's house on our way back in Vavuniya. I had known him for years. His wife Dr. Shanthi, children and brothers were there. Uma Maheswaran, PLOTE leader too was there. He did not speak a word. I expressed my sympathies to the lady and children and offered my services. Since a request was made to get NOVIB to help them to take refuge in India, I assented.

181

Way to halt racial and religious conflict

After my return from Jaffna I sent the following suggestions to leaders and took steps to moot a national conference. The saga of ethnic strife is a well known tale. Though every government has tried to tackle it, it remains unsolved and the situation gets perpetuated. Political parties cannot solve it as they place politics in the priority list. Their immediate aim is to placate voters.

Hence a group not untrammeled by politics should come forward to solve it. Educated representatives from all segments of society should be consulted on the issue.

So I suggested the following procedures.

1. Summon delegates of national organizations and clergy heads for a discussion, on invitation extended by.
   (i) Sarvodaya Movement (ii) Nayaka clergy of the 3 sects
   (iii) Clergy heads of Christianity, Hindusium and Islam.
   (iv) Renowned leaders of civil organisations.
2. Following categories should be called for the discussion.
   (i) Retired judges (ii) Senior lawyers (iii) Recognised doctors (iv) Some scientists (v) Professors and Lecturers in varied fields (vi) Leading businessmen. (vii) Teachers (viii) Artists (ix) High officers (x) Clerks (xi) Labour heads (xii) Members of Societies (xiii) Corporation members (xiv) Reps from minority groups (xv) Presidents and Secretaries from political parties (xvi) Reps from Media and (xvii) Writers.

   About 200-300 could be invited. Initial discussions should go on for 2 days and exchange of ideas is welcome. Opportunity should be provided to present problems and grievances.

3. The first round of discussion is just to surface problems. No decisions taken here. A questionnaire should be formed using the data, give publicity to it via media and answers got from the public.
4. Another board should be appointed to go through these answers. All those who supply answers should be invited and a basic policy should be drawn up for a Peace Declaration.
5. A more formal conference now should be summoned which should be residential, and running to a week.

   The group discussions should follow, data collected summarised and distributed. Again a general discussion should follow for 3 or 4 days. On 5th or 6th day on which a concensus can be reached, data should again be discussed and presented to the general body. A good will session should end it.
6. Many conferences should be held in sequence to make a success of this project.
7. A proposal for establishing an institution like The Board of Human Rights should be presented which should promulgate a Declaration to establish national integration. This Declaration should be constitutionalised.

14.8.1983

182

The first People's Peace Conference

Having returned I wandered in the areas of Kalutara, Matara, Hambantota, Ratnapura and Badulla, Hatton, Kurunegala, Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya trying as far as possible to heal the mental wounds inflicted during the recent melee and also to foster harmony and good-will among the two races again. The Police and Army helped me to hold a number of meetings.

The prelates as Ganegama Sarananakara Maha Thero, Thunnane Sumanatissa Thero and Rambodagala Pagnasagara Thero assisted me. We decided to culminate the series of discussions launched with a 2-day conference at BMICH on October 1 and 2, 1983 during which fell Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Thousand people were to be invited representing varied segments of society.

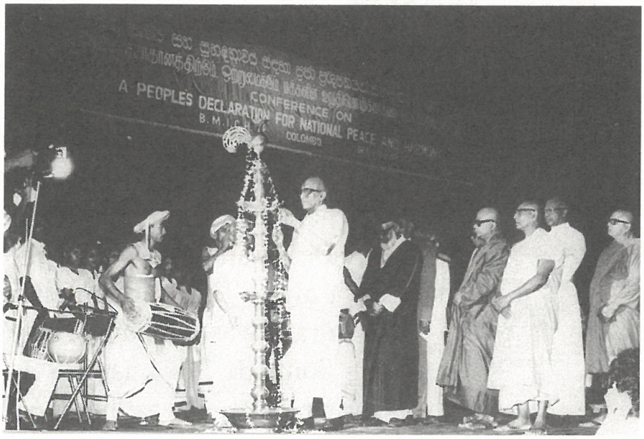
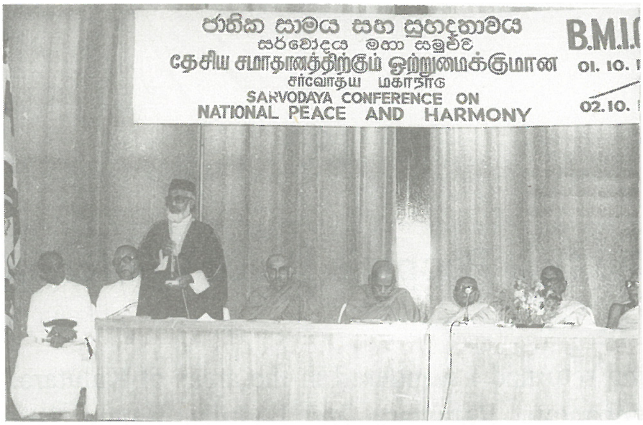

CONFERENCE ON
A PEOPLES DECLARATION FOR NATIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY
B.M.I.C.H
COLOMBO

Photo 189 -
Opening the Conference on Peace and Understanding
held at the BMICH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SARVODAYA CONFERENCE ON
NATIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY
B.M.I.
01. 10.
02.10.

Photo 190 -
Blessings from the Islamic fraternity

The Maha Sangha, the Christian, Muslim and Hindu clergy cum the distinguished guests exceeded thousand.

The speech delivered by Maha Nayake Thero of Malwatte Chapter can be summarised very tersely as follows:

"We appreciate the effort of Sarvodaya in fostering national harmony. We confer our blessings on it."

SARVODAYA CONFERENCE ON
NATIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY
B.M.I.C.H.

Photo 191 -
Blessings from the Christian fraternity

The core of the speech of the Mahanayake of Asgiriya Chapter was that he had never seen a congregation of the different sectors of our society in recent times and that Sarvodaya's effort has Asgiriya's full assistance.

Everybody put in their signatures readily for the Praja Declaration to establish national unity. This document's initial draft was prepared by me with Soma de Silva nangi's assistance. One clause was that the President once appointed should resign from the political party he worked in.

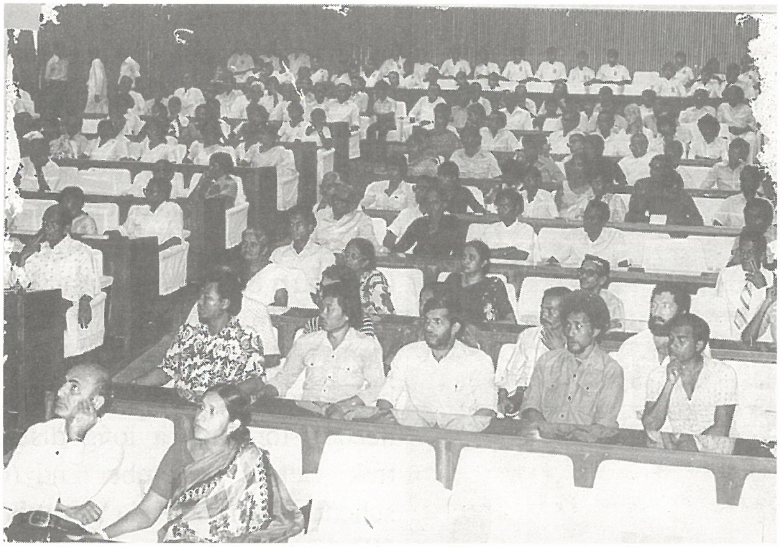

Photo 192 -
Audience

Since no work of national dimension can be accomplished minus the help of the country's President the draft was shown to HE. I personally went to Ward Place with it and out of the 3 copies in the 3 languages he took the English one, read it and came across the most important point.

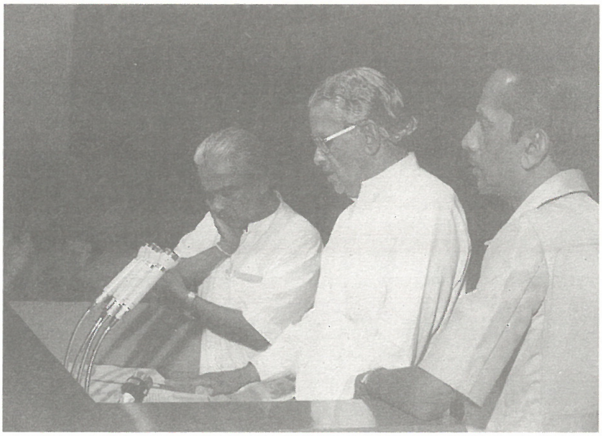

Photo 193 -
Mr. Tissa Wijewardena addresses the Conference

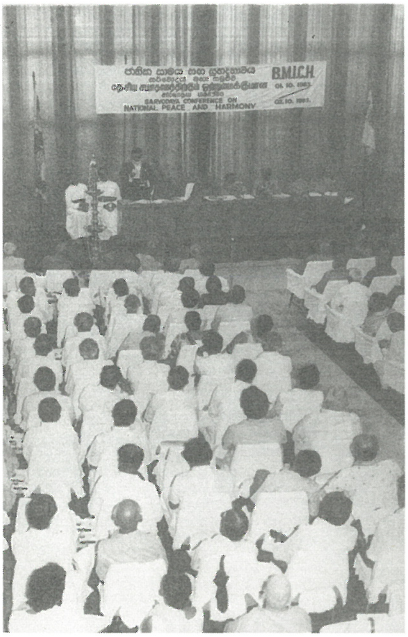

Photo 194 -
Audience

'Ariyaratne, why do you want to drag politics into such a good endeavour? Cut that section about politics. Rest is okay'

That was how we produced the amended Declaration. The first decision and most important was to go on a Sama Pada Yatra (Peace Walk) from Kiri Vehera in Kataragama to Nagadeepa in Jaffna. We began accumulating all provisions needed for such a long distance trek. Before December 2nd (day scheduled for the Pada Yatra) I met HE 19 times to let him know all what we had persevered on and he showed no objection. Our priority is always to positively help the government and shun conflict.

183

People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony

(Adopted on the conclusion of the General Conference held on 1st and 2nd of October 1983 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka)

B.M.I.C.H.
01. 10. 1983.
02. 10. 1983.
SARVODAYA CONFERENCE ON
NATIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY

Photo 195 -
Making the introductory speech at the Conference

Presentation

We, the Citizens of Sri Lanka, belonging to diverse races, professing different creeds and speaking different languages, representing people from all districts of Sri Lanka engaged in professions and services of a non-political nature such as Justice, Education, Agriculture, Labour, Medicine, Science, Technical, Legal, Arts, Letters, Administration, Communication, Business, Banking, Teaching, Clerical, Corporation and Public Security, having assembled at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, on Saturday and Sunday of the tenth and eleventh phases of the waning moon of the month of Binara in the year 2527 of the Buddhist Era, or, 1st and 2nd of October 1983 A.D., responding to the kind invitation extended by The Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya and with the blessings of the Maha Sangha, headed by the most Venerable Maha Nayake Theras, as well as the very Reverend Clergy of Hindu, Christian and Islamic Religious Orders and being devoid of all partialities, with the avowed aim of dispelling the current mutual distrust, disunity, violence and indecision, and with the sole objective of achieving Unity, Harmony, Peace, Co-existence and Prosperity of the Sri Lankan people, and of re-establishing our country as a true, non-violent, united and a nationally integrated society, based on the Law of Righteousness and People's Power, to be again worthy of the honour of being called The Land of Plenty and of Righteousness and having met peacefully, deliberated peacefully, and having arrived at a consensus, do most respectfully present this "People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony" to All Religious Leaders headed by the Maha Sangha, the General Public of The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, their Community Leaders, His Excellency the President and the Honourable the Prime Minister, the Members of Parliament, the Leaders and Followers of all Political Parties, and solicit their fullest co-operation and participation in effecting this Declaration.

Prologue

In 1948 when Sri Lanka was on the verge of freeing herself of foreign domination and influence, of over four and a half centuries, faint signs of a Sinhala-Tamil distrust manifested themselves disrupting the amity that prevailed until then, penetrating into many aspects of the Community Life of the island in the form of racially divisive activities — political and otherwise — leading to national dis-harmony and ultimately to the Tragedy of the last week of July 1983, giving violent shocks to the major portion of the decent, law-abiding Sri Lankan population, violating both the State Law and the Law of Righteousness, destroying social peace, and in particular, the spirit of co-existence that prevailed then, though to a limited degree between the Sinhala and Tamil communities. And having realised that it is the duty of every citizen to study in depth and analyse the symptoms of common degeneration in our society, that surfaced through this tragedy, and to root out its causes, and where as this tragedy has dis-credited and dishonoured Sri Lanka in the eyes of the world, and as the very thought of resultant repercussions of such incidents, if repeated, is frightening, and whereas it is the duty of every responsible citizen to ensure that no such unfortunate situation would ever recur in future in our land and to resolve this complex problem, justly and non-violently and with a genuine conviction, avoiding being extremist, in order to prevent it being worse confounded: and hence, the re-establishment of Peace being the vital challenge of the moment facing the Sri Lankan Community, and it being our firm conviction and fervent hope that it is through such non-violent, just and peaceful means, that a lasting solution may be found, and that the territorial integrity, and the unitary status of the State, together with the fortune that posterity may be able to live in peace and in a spirit of co-existence could be ensured, we, representing the general public of Sri Lanka, have resolved to proclaim this "People's Declaration for Peace and Harmony" for the guidance and inspiration of our ownselves - the Sri Lankans, of the present, as well as those of the future.

Principles

Accepting the Buddha's noble pronouncement
"Hatred does not cease by hatred; only by non-hatred does hatred cease", and basing ourselves on the principles that only non-violence should mark the fate of human progress that all attempts at the solution of problems in modern society should be free from evil in thought and deed, treat the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, comprising 25,332 Sq. Miles of land surrounded by the Indian Ocean, the identity of the Sri Lankan Community, the Unitary

Status of the Sri Lankan State—and, in particular, the laws defining the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as well as the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be safeguarded at all cost, and paying due concern only on the "wrong deeds" but not on "wrong doers" of the past or present, and fully comprehending the difficulty of arriving at solutions by merely shifting the past or present responsibility for the current divisive situation on any single person or a single group alone, and the necessity that in a distress or a crisis that man comes to face individually or collectively, its causal factors should be searched for identified and analysed in depth, and realising the importance of removing of such causal factors, and of arriving at solutions and means thereof we have inscribed the following.

Aims

While proclaiming that the aim that motivated us to participate at this Conference and to adopt this Declaration, was not to offer detailed solutions, or in particular, to propose political solutions to all problems between the Sinhala, Tamil and other communities, which have made way for the crisis facing our contemporary society, but, to create a spiritual, mental, social and intellectual environment on a national scale, needed for the task of finding solutions through friendly discussions and our active participation through the recommendations of twelve intellectual panels which would study in depth, the subjects related to national problems, we re-emphasise that our aim in searching for these solutions is not to get involved in argument and debate, heading to further complications but to create a suitable spiritual, mental, social and intellectual environment for arriving at possible solutions in a friendly dialogue, based on the principles of Truth and Non-violence.

Symptoms of General Degeneration in Our Society

While we accept the fact that, the Stability, Peace and Progress of a Society rest on the degree of understanding, respect and adherence on the part of its members, to its Value Systems, upon which the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Social, Economic and Political Sectors of that society are based, and the honour paid and the adherence attached to it by the members, and that our Society showed a gradual degeneration in all these sectors during the post World-War II era, and that, the resulting decadance reached its climax in July erupting into criminal incidents with possible political and/or communal overtones of a very serious nature and having realised that these incidents have shattered the very foundation of our social fabric, revealing :

Firstly - the existence of a number of groupings in our Society, numerically very small, but yet very powerful, who neither pay any heed to, nor observe, what we as cultured people have commonly upheld for thousands of years, as Good and Evil, Moral and Immoral, Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, Fair and Foul, Human and Inhuman, and that,

Secondly - their solution to Political, Economic, Social or any other problem, is beyond the realms of the accepted Law of the Land being conceived only through violence and thuggery, and that,

Thirdly - they pay not even the scantiest respect to life-human or other and that,

Fourthly - they derive immense mental satisfaction, (consciously or un-consciously) by destroying private and public property, and that,

Fifthly - in their midst even religious leaders, the custodians of Value Systems in our Society, have become ineffective, and that, *Sixthly* - some politicians and others who wielding more of wealth, power and position, guided by narrow, political and economic gains, shield and protect these lawless elements, ignoring the damage and destruction they cause to established norms, human lives and the Nation as a whole, and that,

Seventhly - the efficiency and power of the Police, to safeguard Law and Order in such a situation have been weakened, and that,

Eighthly - even the Law Courts and Prisons, administering and enforcing Law, have become unsafe, and that,

Ninthly - the discipline and morale of the Police and the Armed Forces to make their presence felt in the event of a national, calamity, whatever the cause may be, have deteriorated, and that,

Tenthly - respectful and law abiding citizens have feelings of doubt and fear to stand up and generate and provide People's Power, essential for the protection of the Value System and the enforcement of Law and Order, in the event of these lawless elements taking over dis-respecting Value Systems and violating the State Law, and that,

Eleventhly - the Political Leaders - the strongest section in Modern Society - have failed to provide an undivided, united leadership to the people even during a serious national calamity, and that,

Twelfthly - as a result of all these, even foreign powers have begun to show undue concern in our internal problems causing a threat to National Sovereignty, we have come to be aware that an understanding of these symptoms of common degeneratin evident in all communities living in our country, be they Sinhala, Tamil, Moor, Malay, Burgher or any other, is of utmost importance at this moment of crisis.

Causes of Degeneration

1. Destruction of the Value System

We believe that, foremost among the factors causing this degeneration is the destruction of the Value System, which for centuries past sustained the main civilizing force of Society, and that this Value System was founded on the ancient Hindu-Buddhist Code of Ethics epitomising Respect for Life, in particular, Human life, and that these ethics got stabilised in our Society during the headway of our Society especially when Buddhism exerted its maximum influence, crystallising themeselves into the Observance of the Five Precepts, viz., the Abstinence from Killing, Stealing, Sexual Mis-conduct, Lieing and Consumption of Intoxicants, and that Intrinsically, Christianity and Islam, which later permeated our Society, do not stand in contradiction to the said Value System and that, the study of Pali and Sanskrit the classical languages of India also enriched these values which in turn nurtured all social, economic and political corporations, Man had established with himself and Nature, and that, with the advent of the Western Imperialists, this Spiritual Culture was weakened and the self-sufficient Agricultural Economy collapsed giving way to a Commercial Culture, with the encroachment of which our spiritual values were gradually forced aside, and a Society, totally biased towards Commercial Values was installed, and that, with the pride of place being given to the English Language, in order to facilitate these Commercial motives the source languages which spiritually nurtured the majority of the Sinhala-Tamil community gradually began to dry up, and that Community Life too, assuming the nature of an empty reservoir of which all fountain sources were exhausted, was exposed consequently to an infusion of materialistic ideas and habits, of the foreigners which changed the life style of the local population so that the general Sinhala-Tamil public of the post-independence era who thought and worked in the local languages, became psychologically distanced from one another, though a minority of Sinhalas and Tamils nurtured in the Western values and life-styles (referred to) became closely knit together through the medium of the English language though at the same time being further alienated from the afore-mentioned common Sinhala and Tamil community and that, as a result, the life-style which was founded on the observance of the Five Precepts, of which, respect for human life was the corner stone, was transformed further with an intolerable bias towards the aspirations of a privileged West-oriented few, who enjoyed wealth, position and power.

2. Discrepancy In the Educational System

While accepting that, the relative stability of a value system is dependent on the quality of education that a people receives from generation to generation, and that it was our traditional educational system that gave birth to and nurtured our spiritual and moral values that guided our forefathers in the pursuit of their economic, political, cultural and social activities and that, since our society began to lean towards a commercial culture, all aspects of education, viz., the scope, the methods, the texts used, Parent-Teacher-Pupil Relationship, the Psychological and Physical Environment in which Education was imparted, the Relationship between the Educational Institutes and Society, the degree of Integration of Pupils of different Racial and Religious communities as a Cohesive Group of Citizens belonging to One Nation all these assumed the characteristics of a Competitive Commercial human society and that, the close contact between Spiritual Leadership and Education, was weakened with the decline and sometimes the total destruction of the religious institutions which were centres of Education, and the waning of the influence of monks who supplied their leadership, we aver that the Discrepancey in our Educational System was a main contributory factor that led to the general National Degeneration and the mutual alienation between the Sinhala and Tamil Communities.

3. Loss of the sense of Fear and Shame attached to the violation of Law and Social Norms

We declare our acceptance of the fact that in the past as a result of the Value-based Educational System which was aimed at the fullest development of human personality, members of families, villages, cities, and the nation as a whole possessed a sense of fear and shame of committing illegal and immoral acts and that sentiment of fear arising owing to the possibility of punishment for violation of State Law, and of shame, arising out of inevitable ostracism for the breach of Social Norms, wielded tremendous power as deterrent social forces ; but that, during the last few decades specially since regaining Independence, this healthy social atmosphere met with considerable reversals and the people commonly developed a feeling that, the possession of wealth, power and position, could save one from the consequence of the violation of State Law, and that by the use of intimidation, one may still live high yet violating Social Norms, though being secretly despised by Society. This evasion of social responsibility at the highest level paved the way for the emergence of anti-social and shameless elements in our Society.

4. Weakening of Community Leadership

We accept the fact that, by the time we regained our Independence, there prevailed through the influence of Western imperial force a situation whereby State Law and Legal Power of Righteousness and hence, as local Political Parties and Political Leadership replaced Western Rule, these Parties and their Leaders emerged to provide State, National and Religious Leadership, in place of the Value-based Leadership provided earlier by the Maha Sangha, and that because the majority Sinhala Community and the largest minority - the Tamil Community as well as the Christian and Islamic Communities, all, degenerated in the stranglehold of divisive strife and disintegration, and that the number of Community Leaders capable of providing leadership to the people from village level upto national level based on People's Power and the Power of Righteousness, gradually dwindled and almost disappeared during the more recent years.

5. Interference with State Services by External Forces

We accept the fact that, even in the presence of a weakened Law of Righteousness, Social Discipline and Social Peace will be protected at least to an extent, if the State Law is impartial, but that partisan political forces and the irresponsible acts of some leaders committed openly, discredited the honour and respect due to Public Institutions such as Public Service, Police and the Army which are maintained by Public Funds for Public Safety and that hence the strength that these institutions possessed as Instruments for the Safety of the General Public was considerably weakened, which alone caused the decline of discipline and moral courage of those who serve in them. This, in turn, ushered our Society during that Dark Week, into an Interregnum.

6. Creation of a Wrong Life Style

We accept the fact that, our indigenous Life Style which encouraged and maintained a balance between both Spiritual and material achievements degenerated gradually to lean more towards Wants than Needs, and that the creation of an ostentatious, artificial Life Style with Communication mass Media in the hands of the "Haves" having the way and turning the bulk of the people who form the "Have-nots" like moths to a flame during the past few years, to satify either their inner psychological desires or conceptual needs. Even so, the denial of an opportunity for this by the competitive economic system led a majority of them psychologically to dissatisfaction and despair. Hence, these disgruntled groups, who failed to realise their expectations, and in particular, some groups who were not disciplined by one or more of State Law, a wholesome education and in particular, by Value System, made use of political or communal conflicts caused by small groups, and reacted adversely committing anti-social acts to compensate for their pent-up dissatisfaction.

Removal of the causes of Degeneration

While we accept the fact that mere political solutions alone are inadequate to re-establish National Peace and Harmony, and that even initial steps towards a political solution may be taken and a preliminary attempt at arresting the deterioration of the present problems may be made by first removing the factors that caused the common degeneration of our society, on the acceptance that, as responsible citizens we should:

Firstly — re-establish our Value System,

Secondly — reform the present educational system fully,

Thirdly — regenerate social respect for moral and ethical principles,

Fourthly — create a suitable climate in the country for the State Law to be effective justly and impartially devoid of interferences,

Fifthly — promote a sense of stability discipline and peace in all sectors of society inclusive of political leaders - and community leaders both spiritual and lay,

Sixthly — grant the necessary freedom to the members of the Public Service and the Defence Services in order that they may be effective in the discharge of their duties unhindered and in keeping with the Law of Righteousness and the State Law,

Seventhly — re-establish a suitable economic life style simple, plain and sustainable and promoting, in particular the psychological well-being of the younger generation, and without accepting the western modes blindly and with open arms,

Eighthly — create without any further delay an alternative political system in-keeping with our values and needs, in place of the party based system which is a western product, and is one of the primary causes of the degeneration of and the many ills evident in present day society and for this cause we pledge ourselves to contribute constructively.

The way of Removing the causes of Degeneration

It is a well known fact that whatever the afore-mentioned causes may be the responsibility for the incidents that took place had been thrust upon the Sinhala Buddhist public and their spiritual leadership the Venerable Maha Sangha, by the world's media, and whatever the truth of this pronouncement may be, we are of the opinion that the onus of responsibility for redeeming present society from its state of degeneration rests mainly, with the Sinhala Buddhists.

We accept, therefore, that

Firstly — steps should be taken in order to give a leadership to the Buddhist public to re-fashion their social, economic and political life on the spiritual, moral and cultural values as traditionally laid down, under the leadership of the Maha Sangha,

Secondly — a Buddhist-Hindu Brotherhood Promotion Programme should be launched on the initiative of the Sinhala Buddhist Community owing to the sole reason that it is the Tamil Hindu population that has won world sympathy as the victims of various crimes,

Thirdly — leaders of all religions - as all religions are intrinsically messages of peace and brotherhood - should unite and exert themselves in the forefront in an attempt at inculcating a sense of respect to the moral laws,

Fourthly — the search for subject matter regarding difficulties, obstacles faced, rights and privileges enjoyed by a community has to be pursued and reports arising out of it compiled in such manner as not to widen the existing rifts or to fan further the flames of communalism but to arrive at a settlement to the existing problems on the basis of truth.

Fifthly — the Plantation Communities of Indian Origin possessing Sri Lankan Citizenship should be integrated with the local village communities, and subsequently with the total Sri Lankan Community as an attempt to harmonise further our relations with our neighbour - India.

Sixthly — special attention has to be focussed on Tamil and other communities living in majority Sinhala areas, in order to accept them, and protect them in brotherhood, respecting and assisting to nurture their language and culture.

Seventhly — special attention has to be focussed on Sinhala and other communities living in majority Tamil areas in order to accept them and protect them in brotherhood respecting and assisting to nurture their language and culture.

Eighthly — immediate investigations have to be made into violations or denials of Human Rights of any Community in any part of the country politically, socially, economically, culturally, or administratively and those occuring due to the weakness of Security Services, and to rectify them with the least delay in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, and the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of Sri Lanka,

Ninthly — corrective steps should be taken in a manner that the Rights of innocent citizens are not threatened in cases of individuals or groups, acting outside the realms of the Law, commit any violent anti-state, anti-constitutional acts even when taking steps to stabilise Law and Peace of the Land, as such steps would lead to unify the respectability of the State Law and the Social Norm. Measures also should be taken to establish awe, or the law-abiding quality in the people towards the State Law and Peace, soliciting the People's Assistance and Participation in the maintenance of the same.

Tenthly — the present Economic System and its Processes have to be brought under review and an Economic Philosophy and process in keeping with the National requirements and Values have to be thought out and implemented immediately,

Eleventhly — the Business Community should use their expertise and other facilities to remove various economic causes and obstacles of the common people and become partners of National Development in a broader and more reasonable manner to raise the living standards of rural farming and working communities

Twelfthly — the party-and power-oriented political system, considered by most as the main cause of distrust, differences, sectarianism and other vicious obstacles operating in present society should be replaced by an alternate democratic system of administration within the Unitary Frame of the State of Sri Lanka capable of fostering Mutual Confidence, Friendship, Brotherhood and Peace, in which the Common People can participate to a maximum.

Common Recommendation

This People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony has so far ventured to explain the true situation of our country today, the causes thereof, the necessity of the removal of those causes and the way of removing them.

To study further, the contents of this Declaration within the framework of Principles, Aims and Processes outlined, and to make detailed proposals of the changes that should be effected in every sector of our Society and to submit recommendations and practical plans as regards methods in which these proposals may be put into effect, the participants have decided to appoint at this Conference, 12 Committees to investigate into and report on the following : .

1. How may the Venerable members of the Maha Sangha and the lay leaders act to protect the life-style of Buddhists, in order that it would conform to Buddhist ethics?
2. How can the Hindu-Buddhist spiritual and cultural affinity, a potential buttress to National Unity, be re-established?
3. (a) How can the Fundamental Values of our Society be re-established as an inter-religious force through the consensus of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Islam and other religious leaders?
   (b) How can the National Educational System be re-organised to re-habilitate the Teacher-Pupil relationship, inculcate National Values in children and promote mutual fraternal relationships?

4. What, in fact, are the Rights and Privileges enjoyed, as well as the difficulties and obstacles endured by various communities? How far are current reports correct in this respect?

5. How can the cultural aspects and the Audio, Visual, Written and other communication media be structured and maintained in order to build a national identity and portray a better Sri Lankan image?

6. How can the protection and social integration of the Indian Plantation Communities be ensured?

7. (a) How can the acceptance, protection and integration with the Sri Lankan community, of the Tamil families and other communities living in majority Sinhala areas be promoted?

   (b) How can the acceptance, protection and integration with the Tamil Community, of the Sinhala families and other communities living in majority Tamil areas be promoted?

8. What Human Rights have been violated anywhere in the country, and what measures should be taken to rectify them?

9. (a) How can the Law-enforcing authorities be made aware of the need for correct public relations and greater mental strength and morale in their ownselves in the performance of their duties?

   (b) How can the People's Participation be obtained in re-establishing the respect for the Law of the Land and for Peace?

10. What actions should be taken towards the re-evaluation of the present Economic System and Economic Processes and the evolution of a system of Economic Development in keeping with National Needs and Values?

11. In which manner should business communities come forward to supply more satisfactory expertise and facilities to promote social and economic development through Integrated Community Development activi-

ties, resulting in the reduction of economic disparities and the preservation of National Unity and Harmony?

12. What are the processes of promoting a more advanced Democratic System of Administration, capable of eradicating distrust, differences, sectarianism and other vicious obstacles to social development prevalent at present? How can such a system mobilise the maximum People's Participation?

We have recommended at this Conference that the Chairmen and the Organisers of these Committees should amalgamate with the Executive Council of the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya and act as the National Council for the Follow-up of the People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony.

Determination

We are deeply conscious and our minds are clear about the seriousness of what we have discussed.

This Conference has adopted this People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony which includes several recommendations that we have formulated.

We are convinced that the People's representatives exceeding two thousand in number who expressed their views and put forward suggestions in the formulation of this declaration were motivated by nothing but pure and noble thoughts.

We are firm in the determination that the problems we face today should be solved, on the basis of our traditional and timeless principles of Loving Kindness, Compassionate Action, Altruistic Joy, Equanimity, Giving and Sharing, Pleasant Speech, Constructive Activity and Equality alone.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya with the blessings and participation of other organisations, the General Public and all virtuous people, will embark on a Peace Walk, aimed at evoking over the whole nation sacred emotions and thought forces that emanate from the contents of this Declaration.

We believe in the strength of the Spiritual Force that would be released from the minds of the thousands that would participate in this Peace Walk, and we are confident that the Government of Sri Lanka, and all political parties as well as those groups attempting to solve the persisting problems of the day through extra-parliamentary procedures and by violence as well as by non-violence, will all bestow their blessings and render their support to this noble venture.

Finally, there exists the possibility of the supreme qualities of Excellence, Humanism and Humanitarianism of the total Sri Lankan Community emerging and burgeoning as a formidable force of Righteousness from the very moment that this Declaration is adopted.

This force will ever grow and mature to usher in an era of prosperity to the entire nation marked by the noble qualities of Unity, Harmony and Co-existence.

Wishing from our inner-most hearts that this Declaration will stand as an example, an inspiration and a blessing to all peoples beset with War and Strife and consequent sense of Distrust and Despair in other countries as well, we concluded this Declaration.

Appendix

Special Recommendation

Having witnessed during our life-time the manner in which countries where simple, peace-loving people lived, have become international battlefields mainly owing to the disintegration caused by political, tribal and religious differences, that brought about greater carnage than of last two World Wars, which also destroyed their cultures, almost completely,

We are convinced that if the present degenerating trend evident in Sri Lanka be allowed to proceed further, every possibility exists for a similar situation to befall this island too.

We emphasize therefore, the wisdom of taking immediately, the following steps :

Community Awakening

1. This People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony should be trilingually published island-wide, in all newspapers and through other means of mass communication such as Radio and Television.
2. This Declaration should be read out in every home, school, religous institute, office, association, organisation and voluntary institute and discussed in depth.
3. Every political party, relegating all narrow and ambitious goals, should honestly study this Declaration, keeping only Peace, Brotherhood and the Well-being of the people in mind.
4. Every Ministry, Department and Corporation should take action to give their officers an awareness of the contents of this Declaration.
5. All defence personnel in every Police Station and the Units of the Armed Forces should read, study and understand the contents of this Declaration.
6. All institutes of learning like schools and universities should encourage their pupils and students, as the case may be, to conduct Researches, Discussions, Experiments and Competitions and to write Essays on the contents of this Declaration.
7. Writers, Composers, Artistes, Playwrights, Poets etc., should be enthused to be creative according to their talents on ideas embodied in this Declaration.
8. While every religious shrine should be a place where this Declaration is explained to its patrons, the associated clergy should also organise Meditations, Sermons and Rites and Festivals on National Harmony as the theme.

People's Participation

1. The Sinhala Community should fearlessly and openly take the lead to provide protection, brotherhood, relief

and rehabilitation to the Tamils who are rendered helpless.

2. Tamil communities should fearlessly take steps in their areas to provide protection and brotherhood to the Sinhala families affected during the conflicts of last July and earlier, and invite them back to where they were earlier and rehabilitate them.
3. Sinhala people living in villages neighbouring Plantations where Indian Tamil communities live, should visit those Plantations under the leadership of the Buddhist monks, and provide them with protection, brotherhood, relief and rehabilitation services.
4. The Sinhala Community should take steps to invite the affected Tamil people who lived in Sinhala areas back to those areas and to provide them with protection, brotherhood, relief and rehabilitation services.
5. Tamil people living permanently in majority Sinhala areas should publicly join with the Sinhala people in a spirit of brotherhood to stabilize the unity of the Nation and the non-violent way of life of the people.
6. Tamil people living in the North and the East should encourage youth who are armed with weapons of destruction whatever reason may be to ground their arms and solve their problems non-violently and justly, in a spirit of comradeship with their Sinhala brethren.
7. While personnel who serve in our Police and Defence Forces should realise that to treat those living in the North and the East, stricken with fear of a well-armed and powerful though very small minority, in an unkind harmful and degrading way is a means of aggravating the problem, and that whether they be Sinhala, Tamil or any other community, the basis for the performance of their duties should be the Law of Righteousness and the Law of the State, and that they should trust that this fact alone would help them a long way to solve problems.
8. It should also be pointed out that the officers as well as other personnel of the Police and Armed Forces, are a part

of the genernal public, serving the members of the public themselves and hence, it should be emphatically re-iterated that it is the duty of every citizen to render them co-operation and protection, irrespective of racial differences, so that they may adequately perform their duties.

Political Parties

1. It is very necessary that all parties, including the one presently in power, realise that they are responsible to varying degrees for the present degeneration and confusion in our Society.
2. It is necessary that the leaders and followers of parties realise the importance of preserving the value-systems, respecting and safeguarding the Law of the Land of the non-involvement in violent activities and of the non-defilement of the administration of justice.
3. Instead of protecting and encouraging lawless gangs which are a serious threat to the enforcement of State Law and the maintenance of Community Peace in the present Sri Lankan rural and urban sectors, all responsible political parties should immediately work out processes of giving them correct guidance even with the help of the arm of the law to check their anti-social activities.
4. Thinking of the dis-unity and decadence brought about at village level by party politics, each political party, as a matter of principle, should give every support and encouragement for the emergence of impartial community leaders and development processes through voluntary organisations and Gramodaya mandalas.
5. In solving the Sinhala-Tamil or any other problem of national importance priority should be given to the Unitary Status of the Sri Lankan State, Peace and Co-existence of all communities, placing them above loyalties to their own political parties, and they should be far-sighted enough to arrive at common agreements beneficial to the total community.

6. Realising the consequences of communal politics and accepting lofty principles based on human values, they should engage in political activities which ensure maximum People's Participation.
7. All political parties should appoint a panel of scholars to make a deep study in order to establish a National Political System which guarantees People's Participation.

The State

1. A Commission should be appointed with full powers vested to inquire into all cases where people lost their lives, received serious injuries and suffered destruction of property, the payment of adequate compensation, rehabilitation work etc., and to submit recommendations and to implement such recommendations. This commission should also be empowered to inquire similarly into such ethnic conflicts that took place earlier, making no reservation whether the victims be Sinhala or Tamil, and provide relief to the victims.
2. Steps should be taken towards the immediate removal of short-comings in the implementation of the Sinhala-Tamil Language Policy, so that a person will not face any difficulty in conducting his affairs with the Government owing to the language he speaks.
3. A set of principles should be immediately promulgated to provide protection and permanent residences to Plantation workers of Indian origin, as well as others who have lost employment and live in various parts of the Island with no permanent abode, and a permanent solution should be found for those without citizenship as well.
4. Every step should be taken to ensure that when Defence Forces of the State act against those who flout the State Law and try to achieve their political ambitions by taking up arms, no harm is caused to the self-respect of the innocent public, their property or lives, in any form.
5. Special educational programmes should be conducted to provide the security forces with a deep understanding of

the National Values, Moral Law and the Law of the Land, and to provide them with a knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil languages.

6. People's Participation and Assistance should be sought for, in all Administrative, Organisational and Defence activities and for this purpose, the Government should secure the service and involvement of non-governmental organisations.
7. A more meaningful programme than the one available at present should be immediately drawn up so that those who are sentenced for imprisonment could gain proficiency in various skills, and their characters could be remoulded, for the better during the period of imprisonment.
8. When appointing individuals to Diplomatic Service as Ambassadors, Envoys etc., the Government should, in addition to other qualifications they possess, pay attention to their knowledge of the National and Cultural history, Values and their sense of Patriotism.
9. An immediate rehabilitation programme should be launched for the benefit of the people who live in huts and shanties in towns, particularly in the city of Colombo.
10. A more beneficial but firm policy with regard to alcohol and narcotics should be pursued.
11. A strict control should be exercised on the exhibition of Theft, Crime, Sex etc., by mass media such as newspapers, books, cartoon-papers, television and the cinema.

Education

1. The education of Sinhala and Tamil children should be so organised from their young days, that they could acquire proficiency in both languages.
2. All children throughout the Island should have opportunities to gain admission to any school they prefer. In addition to the education they receive in their Mother Tongue, they should be given the opportunity to study certain subjects in English, Tamil or Sinhala according to their preferences.

3. Sinhala and Tamil classical texts that are beneficial to school children should be translated into Tamil and Sinhala respectively, and published.
4. All institutes of Higher Education and Universities should be made common educational institutes into which children of all races could gain admission.
5. Children studying at all educational levels should be taught and made to respect the principles of all religions and spiritual experiences should be facilitated through inter-religious relationships fostered by activities such as collective meditation.
6. Children belonging to various religions and communities should be made to join together in common cultural and sports activities, so that from their young days, they would develop in their minds the feeling that they all belong to One Nation.
7. In each district and A.G.A's divisions, there should be institutions that grant education at three levels—Primary, Intermediary and Advanced, where Sinhala, Tamil and English languages are taught. These institutes could be organised by the Department of Education and Private Organisations.
8. The study of Pali and Sanskrit languages should be revived.
9. Scholars of Sri Lanka should look into the feasibility of developing an Alphabet, perhaps similar to the Roman Alphabet, so that language learning could be made easier.
10. Children speaking Sinhala should spend one term in the homes of students speaking Tamil in the Tamil speaking areas, and vice versa. Community Service Programme could be promoted so that National Unity could be fostered. Principals and Teachers should take leadership in providing these.

Land - Residence - Occupation

1. There should be no obstacle whatsoever for any citizen of Sri Lanka to buy land, live and practise an occupation in any locality of the island.

2. Sinhala and Tamil leaders should provide leadership in settling Sinhala and other families in areas where the majority are Tamils, on the acceptance of and invitation by the Tamils, and settling Tamil and other families in areas where the Sinhalas are in a majority, on the acceptance of and invitation by the Sinhalas.
3. Agricultural Centres and Industrial Units and such other self-employment generating centres should be organised on State Land for young men and women selected according to ethnic population ratios. These centres should have residential facilities, and have in them as leaders, individuals who are trained in promoting racial harmony.

May rains shower in due seasons!
And render the fields fertile
May every heart be fully contented,
The State be just and the world benefit!

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Back to Jaffna

Photo 196 -
On the way at Kilinochchi

I went back to Jaffna again in October. At Subash Hotel I explained the objectives of the Pada Yatra and about 30 gathered there. The Rotary Club had organized this meeting. I sensed that all the LTTE leaders too were there. Though the Rotarians spoke neutrally the others blasted me stressing on the cruelties inflicted by the Sinhalese. But I tried to be very patient.

After the meeting some youths that I suspected to be very hostile came to me. They told me, if you come upto Elephant Pass on this Pada Yatra, without getting killed by the Sinhalese we will hand over our weapons and join your cause, otherwise we will destroy you. I accepted their challenge and we shook hands and parted cordially.

I told the President, Prime Minister and others that I was sure the armed youth would join our non-violent course.

The Prime Minister with whom I had discussed our programme many times expressed his willingness to join the Pada Yatra.

December 2, 1983 was spent on preparing this Peace Walk. Rev. Quintin Fernando, the former Bishop of Colombo visited me in the morning and wished us well. He reminded us of Rev. Bishop Lakshman Wickramasinghe then Bishop of Colombo. I told Bishop Fernando that Bishop Wickramasinghe if living would have been a great source of courage to me.

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Tasting Politics

On December 3, 1983 the President Jayewardene phoned me requesting me to meet him at 7.00 a.m. at Ward Place. Five minutes before 7.00 a.m. I was there and he was already dressed and ready to go to Sirikotha. But he sat for a short time in the verandah and told me that they were rather wary of Sarvodaya's Peace Walk but asked me to go ahead.

Our Sama programme had got much publicity via media and there was a supplement in every newspaper that day on it. Asking my driver to bring my vehicle, he got me into his red official car. As we drove along main roads, I pleaded with him to support our programme. As the vehicle stopped at Sirikotha many gaped as they saw me alighting from the vehicle. They would have already associated me with the UNP. That is politics. And actually his parting words to me at this instance were 'You will have a taste of politics.' It was very sarcastically put.

To create awareness among the younger members of Sarvodaya about our Pada Yatra from Kirivehera to Jaffna, I held a Family Gathering on December 3rd night. My mother, wife and my children Charika, Jeevan, Sadeeva, Diyath and Nimna all attended it.

I explained that humans all belong to our group irrespective of colour, race, caste and religious differences. But because of these superfical differences, people were destroying each other. I hope to intervene, I said and I may be assaulted. On this Nimna said, 'If anybody attacks father, we will attack them back'. It was with difficulty I explained to 6 year old Nimna that hatred does not cease by hatred.

I had got mother to promise me not to cry and told my wife, Charika and Jeevan, that were I to die they should go on with this venture. We spent about 1 hour, discussing all aspects. On December 4, I sent all my family members including my mother to Thanamalwila.

I was to set out at 6.00 a.m. with Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Bandu and Piyasena. As I was about to get in to the jeep, the phone rang. It was the President asking me to come to Ward Place. When I explained the situation he was adamant. So I went, leaving the rest there.

There at Ward Place were gathered Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Mr. Menikdiwela, Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe who later became Prime Ministser and an officer I guessed as belonging to be Secret Police. The President seated at his table motioned me to sit before him. In a very grave and stern voice he told me in English, 'Ariyaratne, everybody here is advising me to get you to stop this'. I was shocked but I said in a loud tone, in English, 'What? They want you to ban this? Who are these cowards? Are they the very people who were against my advice to you to impose a curfew that day? When we were trying to save peoples lives where were they that day?' (The day of the communal violence)

'No it is not this group who is opposing it' he said. 'To stop our Pada Yatra you will have to manacle my hands and leg cuff me too. There are thousands waiting for me at Kataragama. This is the 20th time I am meeting you on this. Why didn't you tell me anything against it earlier, Sir? They just cannot stop it.'

Then the person I suspected to be from the Secret Police began speaking. Actually he had been HE's son Mr. Ravi Jayewardene. He spoke on the danger involved in this journey but I countered that it was I taking the risk, not the government.

Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe said 'If it is postponed to the school vacation. Then children too can be invited.'

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake was silent while Mr. Menikdiwela said that CID has warned of threats to my life. He seems to be the one most keen to stop our Yatra.

As I spoke with much emotion, HE placed his right palm on my left hand and said, 'Alright, Ariyaratne I do not insist you to stop it. But you invite me to take part in it.'

'Certainly. But I must invite all political leaders including Mrs. Bandaranaike.'

'That is alright' said the President and told Mr. Ravi Jayewardene to get ready the airplanes to Wirawila.

He said he would bring along Ananda Mangala Maha Nayake Thero of Singapore too. As I was about to get out of the room, he reiterated 'You will get your taste of politics,' which statement I didn't much comprehend. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake got me into his vehicle saying he wants to talk to me and taking me to another house informed me as to who was behind the sabotage and encouraged me to go ahead. I wanted to invite Mrs. Bandaranaike over the phone from that house but was told that there was no time.

We left to Kataragama at 12.00 noon and entered Jayasumanaramaya in Thunnane to meet Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Thera. But he had gone to Avissawella and there we went again. There the Sangha including him chanted pirith, tied pirith threads while Fr. Tissa Balasuriya conferred the blessings of the Virgin Mary on us.

We also went to the memorial site of Ven. Henpitagedara Gnanaseeha Thero conferred merit on him to nourish blessings.

After lunch at Thanamalwila we offered flowers and lit the Peace lamp prepared by Weera malli. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya too helped in illumining it.

At about 5.30 p.m. we reached Kataragama. About twenty thousand Peace participants had already congregated there.

The Bank of Ceylon rest rooms, the YMBA rest rooms and several other lodging houses had been made available for us.

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Religious performances before Kataragama Kirivehera

Arrangements were made to hold an all-night Pirith and Dhamadeshana. By 8.00 p.m., Prime Minister Premadasa had arrived. As I was devolved the task of inviting the Bhikkus for Pirith, I did so after elucidating the aims of the Sakman Bhavana - Meditational Peace Walk. After the Maha Piritha, Prime Minister wished us and left.

Due to the congestion in the YMBA Rest Rooms, we went to the Police Rest where Neetha, my children and Mr. & Mrs. Rajasuriya were already lodged. Up at 5.00 a.m. I went to Kirivehera and received pirithwater and thread. Having worshipped at Kirivehera I meditated and observed the precepts. I

Photo 197 -
Indulging in all religious rituals

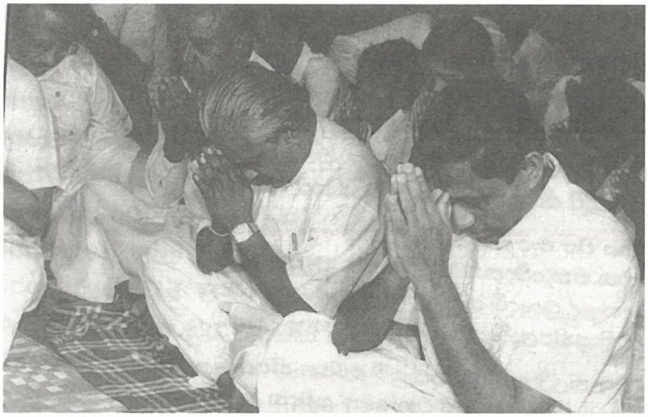

Photo 198 -
PM taking part in Peace pooja at Kataragama

came back and rested. Then I had discussions with Superintendent of Police Leo Perera in charge of the South, and some senior Police Officers. At 4.00 p.m. I participated in the Poojas at Hindu Kovils as Amman Kovil, Shiva Kovil, Ishwara Kovil along with the Maha Sangha, Islam and Christian prelates. Then we all took part in the prayers conducted at Gaffar Hajjyar's Mosque. For the first time in Kataragama history, a Christian service was held under the aegis of Fr. Tissa Balasuriya. The Kataragama Maha Devale Pooja ended the multi-religious services. The Basnayake Nilame Attanayake Jayawardana handled all this. These co-ordinated religious services were a novel feature in our religious matrix.

A spiritual revival was burgeoning. To initiate the bhavana programme I went to the mike, when somebody informed me that Mr. Menikdiwela, HE's Secretary has come and wishes to talk to me. I told the messenger to ask him to join the bhavana and went on through the steps of meditation, ie. relaxing, Anapana sathi bhavana by which mental energy is concentrated and releasing maithree chintha (thought) and resolution for peace.

After about one hour I searched for Mr. Menikdiwela to be told that he had left in anger. We ended the bhavana and deciding to meet again at 5.00 a.m. next day dispersed to our lodgings. The lights went on disappearing and appearing.

I again received a message that in the Basnayaka Nilame's house Mr. Menikdiwela was waiting for me. I went there and he asked me the next day's programme. I said there is no change. SP Leo Perera and Provincial Minister Dr. Cyril too were there. Mr. Menikdiwela wished to know for what reason the President was coming here. I said we would welcome him with bhavana, get him to illumine the Peace lamp and then walk with us to Menik Ganga and at Tissa, he would address the peace walkers.

There are others who say other things, he began, but I countered by saying 'Let anything be said. This is not a political venture, but a spiritual one.' When again he began to speak, I wished him 'good night' and said let us meet tomorrow. I had no need to have a discourse on spirituality with a person like him.

Three days earlier it was he and Mr. Ravi Jayewardene who were expending their maximum energy to cripple this programme. And I sensed at that moment that they would really succeed in their plan.

Photo 199 -
Mr. Gaffar Hajjiyar, Basnayaka Nilame Jayawardena Attanayake, A Sikh genleman, Mr. Jamshed Fozdar and a Hindu savant along with me taking part in Sarva Saama pooja

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Peace Pada Yatra Begins

On 6th at 4.00 a.m. (dawn) I woke up, bathed and was at Kirivehera templeyard by 5.00 a.m. T. S. Silva and Raja Wijekoon malli were with me. The yard was a sea of heads.

I announced to the crowd, the objectives and policies underlying our programme plus other vital information. Till the President arrived, we indulged in bhavana.

Six a.m. came, and minutes ticked away but HE did not arrive. SP Leo Perera now, called me aside and said that the President could not come either to Tissa or Kataragama. I felt emotionally affected and knew that a cruel hand was behind it all. I asked Mr. Leo Perera to wait there and along with Ananda Mangala Nayake Thero came to the outer yard. I told him to

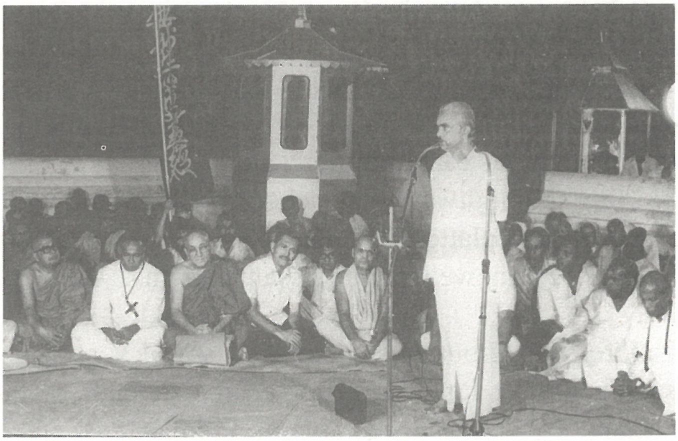

Photo 200 -
Presenting the agenda of the Peace Walk at Kiri Vehera
Temple esplanade

Photo 201 -
Peace walkers participating at Maha Devale pooja

explain matters to His Excellency and somehow bring him along. Now we began our programme. With Mr. Leo Perera, Ananda Mangala Thero went to Wirawila.

While the Maha Sangha chanted the Karaneeiya Metta Sutta, 25 religious leaders perambulated around the Chaitya carrying 25 baskets of flowers. Then amidst cries of 'Sadhu' they lit the oil lamp of Peace. I handed them 25 shawls of Peace and invited them to herald the Pada Yatra.

In the forefront walked the Japanese Bhikkus Ven. Kosunada Yakasima, Hiroshi Ito and Nobuyaki Yokosuke beating their drums and chanting ' Namyo Horengekio'. Following them flowed the crowd, that had thronged there, three in a row. Thus commenced the Pada Yatra we had planned months back with meticulous care and much cost.

Skirting the highway were school children and adults who encouraged us with platters of milk rice and sweetmeats and pure water. By 11.45 a.m. we were in Tissamaharama. We had walked 16 miles.

I addressed a group of students of Tissa M.V. at the entrance to Tissa. Then after lunch I addressed the inmates of the open Prison Camp by which time Swami Premananda and Swami Durgananda had arrived. The Nayaka Thero of Tissamaharama Ven. Panditha Hakmana Nandarama, provided all facilities to us and gave alms to the monks who joined us.

From Kataragama to Tissa I was escorted by two white clad personnel. They were from the CID. The next two who joined were from the Air Force. They told me that there was a plot by UNP youth to shoot me on the way to Tissa or at Tangalle but told me not to fear. They further told me in case my programme succeeds a calamity would be averted and hence they were for me. I told them to do their allotted duty.

Ven. Ananda Mangala and SP Leo Perera who had gone to meet the President came to meet me but went back. They told me that the President was expecting an assurance from me that we would cease our trek. At 9.30 a.m. they again met the President and went to Weerawila and came to Tissamaharama with HE at about 6.00 p.m. Most had gone away to bathe. I sent a message to all of them to gather. Then I went to wrap the peace shawl around the HE whereupon he took it into his hands saying he would wrap himself. Mr. Menikdiwela and the Provincial Minister too were there and I began the family gathering.

Taste of Politics

Tissa Nayake Thero gave Pansil to the audience and Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula declared that he came all the way from England to take part in this. I explained the background of the Pada Yatra and events following and then invited the President to

Photo 202 -
The Peace messengers emerging from the front entrance

Photo 203 -
Peace messengers on the march

speak. He said that there is a multitude of well-intentioned people as well as evil ones. Hence till an All Party Peace Conference he has envisioned is held, it is better to postpone this Pada Yatra.

Now I remembered his saying, 'Ariyaratne you will get a taste of politics'. A poem in the Kavsilumina too entered my mind. In this poem the king without any speech signals only with one hair of his eye lashes to a dancing lass and the communication is executed.

Parallely I felt the force behind that speech. Not only those at the top but their thug followers too were very powerful. Was

Photo 204 -
Mr. J.R.Jayewardene being received at the Peace Walk

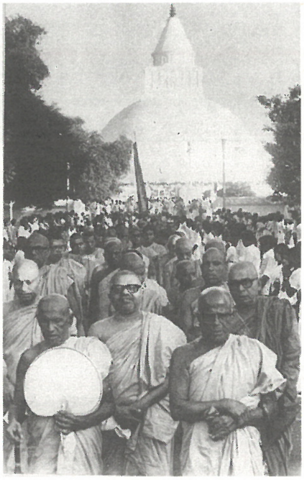

Photo 205 -
The Maha Sangha before the
Tissa Dagoba

that to happen that the popular force would be with us created a crisis for the government. I had actually launched the Pada Yatra to establish peace and not to create another holocaust. I had no wish to clash with the govt. I understood that a cruel hand had pushed HE into this decision.

I stood up and requested HE to announce in that instance itself when this All-Party Peace Conference would be held and he replied 'within two weeks'. I spoke justifying the President's decision in the present context, and requested that the audience endorse the decision with a cry of 'Sadhu'.

After HE and his party left, our Family Gathering continued. Ven.Wellethota Paggnasila Thero regaled us with a speech where the king and his ministers on a certain journey fell into a pit and this catastrophe avoided an oncoming bandit attack. Ven. Mapalagama Vipulasara Thera too made a timely speech and so did Fr. Tissa Balasuriya. Though everybody dispersed, they did so with an unpleasant feeling that the President had duped them. His followers had warned him that if I was to proceed to Matara, that the lakhs of crowds gathered there would be with me and not with with him. The President had got trapped in this warning.

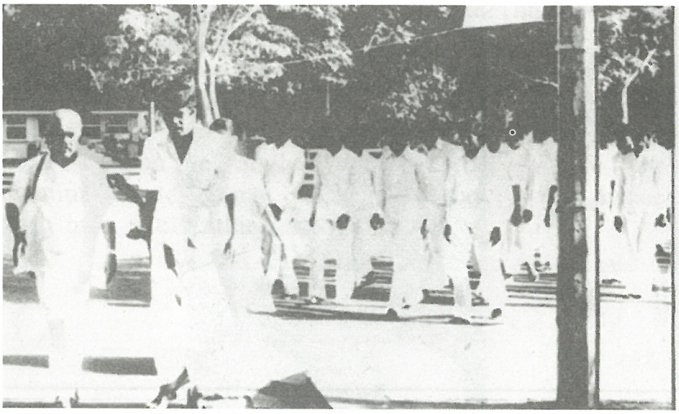

Photo 206 -
Mr. K.Kadiramalai, co-ordinator of Vavuniya district
on the Peace Walk (on L)

A group including Fr. Balasuriya and Ven. Rambodagalle Paggnasekera Thero walked for two weeks with me, while the Japanese Bhikkus walked all the way to Jaffna. They were attended to on the way and I too joined them here and there.

Though the President very craftly halted our Pada Yatra, the five Japanese monks went right up to Jaffna. The Sarvodaya workers in the North provided them facilities right up to Nagadeepa. I requested the young monk Nubioka to return.

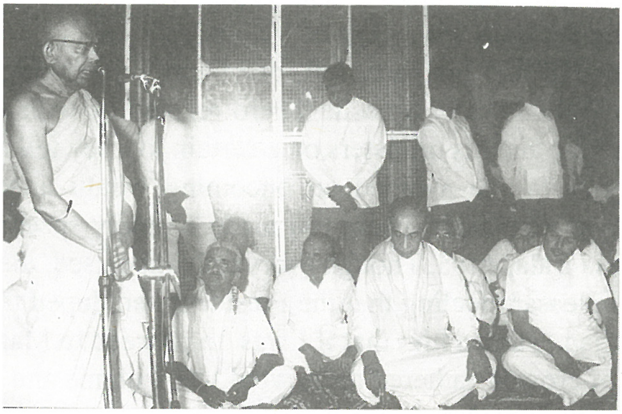

Photo 207 -
Dr. Walpola Rahula Thero addresses the Family Gathering

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Humour and the State Head

Mr. Upali Senanayake, the youngest son of F.R.Senanayake and I were good friends. Through him I got to know members of the Senanayake and Kotelawala families very intimately. One person I got to know was Mr. R.G. Senanayake.

He passed away through an illness and with Sarvodaya personnel I attended his funeral, mostly because Mr. Upali Senanayake was a Vice President of ours then.

When the remains were lying in their ancestral house, I went there several times and spoke with the family about funeral arrangements. One day when I went there the President too was there. As he saw me, he said ‘Come come Ariyaratne’ and got me to sit near him. Now partly covering his mouth with his hand, he began talking to me softly.

‘This house has a long history connected not only to independence politics but to our youthful times’ he began. "Dickie (RG) is a brick to sleep. Once he sleeps it is a trial to wake him up. His mother was very strict with him. Once RG had addressed an elderly servant by name, for which he was admonished by her and asked to kneel down and beg pardon. By 7.00 p.m. Dickie had to be at home. Never was he allowed to come home after 8.00 pm. But we are up to our tricks only at ten in the night. We used to tie a jute rope around his toe. Then at 10.00 p.m. we come to the gate and pull it. We used to tie it earlier to the gate. The mother comes and checks and Dickie is fast asleep. The moment we pull the rope he is up and out, through the window. It is at dawn he gets back. And before mother gets up he is fast asleep snoring.”

Many mourners who were visiting the house were unaware of the light-veined stuff HE was entertaining me with. The whole burden of the country was on him but I really appreciate the way the President can relax.

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Dr. James P. Grant

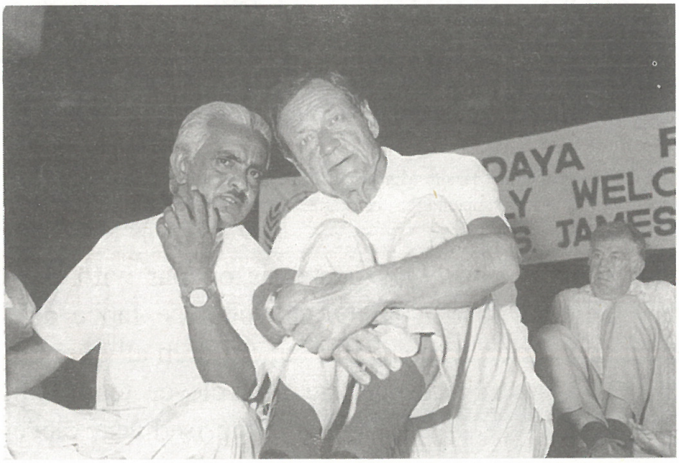

Photo 208 -
With Dr .James P. Grant at Damsak Mandira

I associated a good many who had made a name in international development work. Dr. James P. Grant, Third Executive Director of UNICEF was among them and had become a life long pal of mine.

During the time he worked as Chairman of the Overseas Development Council of Washington, our friendship intensified. It was the Council that introduced into the world the PQLI Index, I went several times to Washington when it was being formulated.

One day Dr. and Mrs. Grant invited me to stay the night over at their house. He told me that night that he has been nominated by President Jimmy Carter to work as Executive Director of UNICEF and asked my opinion. I told him to accept it and that we

Photo 209 -
Mrs.Grant, Health Minister, Dr. Ranjit Atapattu and Dr.Grant opening the coastline centre at Lunawa

would all support him. This post was on par with the Deputy Secretary General post of UNO and his acceptance of the post heralded a new order in the welfare of children all over the world. He got a clever team to help him that comprised very clever media giants as Tarzie Vittachchi and efficient international civil servants as Richard Jolly. Very close links with state leaders, religious leaders and community leaders were established and he formulated a vast gamut of policy declarations regarding child rights. Thereby ensuring the protection of crores of helpless children. To the many conferences held in America, Europe, Japan, Kenya, Indonesia, India and Philippines he invited me to make speeches. So the gates were thrown open to me to serve the

Photo 210 -
With kids of the Lunawa centre are Dr. & Mrs.Grant

Photo 211 -
With UNICEF delegate Dr. Fareed Rahaman, Dr. James P. Grant, Dr. Ranjith Atapattu and Dr.Wickrema Weerasooriya

entire young populace in the world. From September 1 to 7, 1984 Dr. and Mrs. Grant were on an official tour of Sri Lanka. He declared open the Ocean- fringed Training Centre at No.49 Uyana Road, Lunawa. Later Sarvodaya had a grand procession to accompany him from there to Damsak Mandira. This ceremony was attended by Dr. Ranjith Atapattu, the Health Minister, Dr. Wickrama Weerasooriya, Secretary of the Planning Ministry, Dr. Fareed Rehaman, UNICEF representative in Sri Lanka, and Mrs. Ethel Grant.

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PEUGEOT

Photo 212 -
The Peugeot received from UNICEF

When he again visited our island, the President felicitated him with a special dinner for him to which I too was invited. The vehicle I drove and used for 13 years broke-down on the way and I was late for dinner. When questioned by Dr. Grant about the delay I explained the cause which resulted in him and HE bursting out in laughter. Dr. Grant then ordered Mr. Rahaman to import a new Peugeot car for me and Dr. Wickrama Weerasooriya promised to exempt it from duty. Still we use this vehicle.

His wife first passed away and then he fell ill. But he went on working. It was at UNICEF headquarters in New York I met him last. A note in his purse read, 'I am suffering from cancer, but I would not let it conquer me.'

Despite his affliction he went on with his service to help children of the world. In January 1995, he passed away. His last letter, had been a showering of good wishes for the New Year on me and his son had posted it to me. We held a special Pooja for him.

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Nam Yo Ho Renge Kio - He sacrificed his life to ensure peace for us

Many misconstruing the present civil unrest in the country as an ethnic feud between the Sinhalese and Tamils keep on escalating hatred and violence in the country. Yet others regard it as a terrorist movement against a legally established state, again breeding animosity. The LTTE firm in the belief that war is the only instrument to win their rights are in a bitter battle not only against the Armed forces and the Police but even against the general public. So parties have taken cudgels to show their might and power to the other party.

Sarvodaya is of the contention that the conflict between himsa (violence) and ahimsa (non-violence) can only be conquered by ahimsa. On October 28, 1984 32 year-old Ven.

Photo 213 -
The Japanese monks on the Peace walk before the
Sacred Temple of the Tooth

Photo 214 -
The Japanese bhikkus beating their drums pose with me

Noboyuki Yokotsuka of the Japanese Nippon San Miohoji sect was murdered in Jaffna. He was of the above Sarvodaya thought. The sacrifice of a foreign bhikkhu in the cause of our peace should be written in gold letters in our land's saga. He belonged to the above mentioned sect and had come here to attend the First Peace Conference held at the BMICH on October 1983. He took part in the Pada Yatra that was postponed on the request of the President but till March 1984 he went on to Jaffna. Sarvodaya provided all amenities to him and other monks. Later they came back and visited Sri Pada and other holy places. Ven. Noboyuki Yokotsuka next went to India and helped in the construction of the Sama Chaitya at Cape Camorin in India.

On October 15, he came back here and as the ethnic strife had aggravated by now he put his own life at risk and went again to Jaffna.

This venerable who left Japan in May 1977 had been ordained as a monk in Rajagaha city in India in October 1978. To commemorate the 6th year of his ordination he wished to disseminate his peace message from Jaffna. In a letter dated October 25, 1984 he wrote to his parents as follows:

"I feel that until now I have not got the chance to pay my homage to humanity. Now as presented in Sambuddha Pundarika Sutta the time has come for me to do this i.e. to respect humans. The Buddhists in the South (of Lanka) respect my yellow robes. The people living here hate the southerners. I am now dedicated as Nam yo Horenge Kio to annihilate their hatred and to install ahimsa in their minds". In a letter dated October 20, 1984 written again to his parents he mentions.

"I am now lodged in a small Hindu kovil near the Urban Council. The watcher looks after me. I get up at 4.30 a.m. and from 5.00 to 6.00 a.m. I chant stanzas. From 6 a.m. I chant 'Nam yo Horenge Kio' beat the divine drum and traverse the streets till 7.30 a.m., having my meals if given. Otherwise I buy some bread. Again I begin my yatra at 9.00 a.m. I get a meal or a cup of tea once in 2 or 3 days. I come back to my Hindu kovil where I bathe, eat something, write letters and sleep at about 10.00 p.m. Little kids follow me. Those who speak English tell me, 'You are talking of peace here. But what peace with the Sinhala murderers'. It may be true or not, but terrorism is no answer to this. One cannot give a logical answer to this situation. I believe only in Sakya Muni Buddha's teaching and the teachings of Maha Bodhi Satva Nichiro Thera and of my own leader the very Ven. Nichidatsu Fuji Guruji'.

On October 26, a thug assaulted him. But the monk went on mumbling words of compassion especially the words, Nam yo Horenge Kio. The thug went off. On October 28, he was walking along the streets beating his drum when four thugs shot him on his head, shoulder, stomach and thighs, killing him. This prelate who sacrificed his life for our peace cause, is an example to all of us.

I feel that an indepth understanding of this sacrifice especially by the Buddhists is necessary. Hence I choose to record here an account of the most Ven. Nichidatsu Fuji Mahanayake Thero, teacher of Yokatsuko Bhikkhu and also of the Nippon San Myohoji sect begun by him and Maha Bodhisattva Nichiro who inspired him.

The latter was born in 1222 in Niuran colony in a fisher family of Japan. It was a time of war, genocide and other calamities, that made him search for the core of Buddhism. He finally discovered that this core is capsuled in Sambuddha Pundarika Sutta which sutta he described as 'Nam yo Horenge Kio'. He concluded that a government's aim should be to build a Dharmista society and thereby ensure world peace. Hence the existing government fell under his criticism. Harassed beyond measure, he was executed on October 12, 1271.

Just as the execution was about to take place, a ball of fire from the south east had shot across the sky to the north west lighting up the skies. The executioner fainted and the army officers, ran away in fright. The books written by him became much popular out of which one tale is produced here.

Photo 215 -
At the headquarters of the Nippon San Sect in Japan

At that time there lived a Bodhisatva bhikkhu named Anapahasa. This name owes to the fact that he used to praise every bhikkhu, bhukkuni, upasaka and upasika he met in the following strain.

'I respect you extensively. I will not demean you nor insult you. This is because you all are treading the path of Bodhisattva and are potential Buddhas'. He never spent time reading suttas or chanting pirith but only indulged in the above praise of his colleagues.

But among them were hot-tempered monks too. They reacted by saying, 'This foolish monk! From where has he emerged? 'He predicts that we will all become Buddhas. We do not need such false predictions.' And they used to insult him and hurt him with aggressive words. But never did he retaliate with anger but go on to say 'You are sure to end up a Buddha!' Next they began

Photo 216 -
At the headquarters of the Buddhist sect of Nippon
San Miyoho Jee

Photo 217 -
On the Peace Walk

to assault him which made him walk away and shout, 'I will not insult you. You are sure to attain Buddhahood'. Finally the arrogant Bhikkhus and Bhukkhunis the Upasakas and Upasikas named him 'anapahasa'. (non-insulting).

The notes of Maha Boddisattva Nichiren that occur in the 6th Chapter of the Chinese translations of Saddamma Pundarika Sutta mentions this tale. The basic teaching of this sect is the potentiality of every human to become a Buddha.

It was the most Ven. Nichidatsu Fuji Nayake Thero who began this sect. He was born on August 6, 1895 and was ordained at 19 years. By 13 years he had achieved many dhutangas and was of the belief that beating on the hand drum while chanting 'Nam yo Horenge Kio' can lead to a peaceful atmosphere.

He was determined to substantiate the predictions of Maha Bodhisattva Nicheren and even undertook to revive the defunct Buddhism in India. Having begun spiritual contact with Mahatma Gandhi, he called the latter 'Guruji'.

Ven. Theros Takeshima and Morioka took the ashes of Yokotsuka Thero to Japan and even Prime Minister Premadasa took

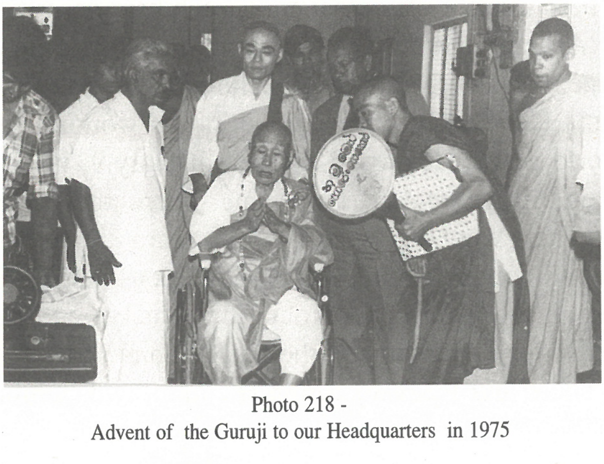

Photo 218 -
Advent of the Guruji to our Headquarters in 1975

part in the cremation rites where he declared that Yokotsuka Bhikkhu's sacrifice of life was tantamount to building a huge sama stupa in Sri Lanka surpassing all other Sama (Peace) Chaityas. Ven Gushtano Thero who has lived in India and England too came for the cremation, and volunteered to sacrifice his life too for the cause of Lanka's peace. However, the HE President Jayewardene suspended the Sama Bhavana in Jaffna. Ven Fuji Guruji also gave instructions that the Tamils of Cape Camorin should be taught Buddhism and the sect could act as couriers to get them to stop the violence issuing from Jaffna.

Photo 219 -
Place where the ashes of Ven. Noboyuki Yokotsuka Thera were enshrined

Most Ven. Fuji Guruji came in the 1970 decade to Sarvodaya Headquarters and planted links between the sect and us. He and his followmen have traversed five continents beating the hand drum, It was he who pioneered the building of the Sama Chaitya in Japan enshrining Buddha relics, after the nuclear disaster of Japan. In 1975 Ven. Guruji delivered a sermon at Sarvodaya. I took part in his 99th birthday celebrations in Tokyo.

I also took part in the 100th birthday celebrations of Ven. Nichidatsu Fuji Guruji, along with Mr. Nissanka Wijeratne. Fuji Nayake Thero made a very eloquent speech here describing his life at Gandhi Ashram and how he traversed the whole globe carrying the message of Maha Bodhisattva Nichiren. He requested the building of Sama Chaityas all over the world and working towards the goal of world peace. He passed away on January 9, 1985.

I paid my respect to the venue where the ashes of Ven. Yokotsuko Thera were deposited. Rosi Kurihara Thero took me to all the nooks and corners of this beautiful religious venue. I also went round playing the hand drum around the Chaitya and then I went inside the Buduge, worshipped the Buddha and conferred merit in Ven. Fuji Thero and Yokotsuku Podi Hamuduruwo (junior monk).

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Royal Rays

Ven. Anuruddha Thero of Galle was the Chief Incumbent of the Sambuddha Jayanthi Chaitya in the harbour. I went to his aramaya on receiving the news of his demise. The remains lay in the upper storey. As I went in, a female entered whom I did not know. Everybody there withdrew and I was under the impression that they did it to make way for me.

I indulged in a few minutes bhavana, gazing at the thero's remains and when I opened my eyes, that female even shorter than me was standing there. She turned to me and questioned in a very regal tone, 'Who are you?'

The crowd surrounding us stared amazed. And the woman's tone made me say, 'Lady! Even I don't know who I am'.

The crowd controlled their titters as I came out. I asked somebody who she was and got the reply, 'She is Minister so and so'.

I came back to the hall and told her that I did not recognize her and said that maybe she too did not know who I was making her ask such a question. Subsequent to this incident we always were pleasant to each other when we met. The royal rays had dimmed.

Daya Ananda Perera

I like to move among the people. However, physically fatigued I am, moving among the people made me get over that fatigue and makes me mentally tranquil too.

Photo 220-
Mr. D.A.Perera

The publicity Sarvodaya gradually won made me move in many so called higher circles. In these circles many times I have felt lonely due to the fact that these beings in the upper strata of society were western-oriented. However much I tried to play a pragmatic role among them the solitude never left me. But some Sarvodaya personnel mitigated my loneliness and among them is Daya Ananda Perera, since others have long since died.

Daya born on September 14, 1930 is an old boy of Mahinda. He was senior to me by 3 classes and was an exemplary student and Head Prefect too. He was worth of emulation and was known by the pet name of DAP. Having studied at Mahinda and Ananda, he entered the Ceylon University, obtained BSc. Hons in Mathematics in 1954. Post Graduate Diploma in Mathematics and also MA in Maths and Science and later MA in Education in Ohio University in USA. His whole life was dedicated to education.

At the beginning of 1961 he came back to the island and visited me at my house in Maradana and while working at the Education Ministry, worked for us too. His dedication to Sarvodaya is indeed remarkable. But in 1967 when I invited him to take over a part of the 100 villages Development programme he refused.

The answer was, 'I cannot perform two services simultaneously. I am just now building a house for my mother. So after that I will help you'.

Later I designated to him the task of re-structuring Sarvodaya, so that the village units would be autonomous. But the plan he came up with did not satisfy me, so I myself formulated a new plan and handed it to him whereupon he said, 'As a director in a government ministry, my mind was not free as I always had my thought patterns trapped in the state framework. Now I am enlightened by reading this'.

This is a good example of his humanitarian qualities.

In 1977 when I visited Philippines, reading about it in a newspaper he came to meet me. Then he declared that after his return he could again work with me, which he did.

His brilliant career reads as follows:

Post Graduate Degree in Statistics - obtained from Vidyodaya University in 1974, Director of Education (1971-76), Specialist in Curriculum Development in Philippines (1977-78), Director of Sarvodaya Education Institute (1979-81), Senior Consultant in Research of UNESCO, Hamburg, Germany (1981-83) and the first Director-General of the National Institute of Education. He had also served several times as a UNESCO adviser in many countries.

The work he prepared between 1984 and 1993 as General Secretary of Sarvodaya went a long way to complement the structural foundation of Sarvodaya. His recommendations did not limit themselves to mental exertion. Before preparing a module or programme he would go to the village and live there. He had lived in several of our villages and camps and provincial and district centres garnering experience to prepare his modules and courses. The public serving fabric we have built up owes mostly to his devotion.

I have my utmost respect to DAP who works not only as a member of our Executive Council but as our chief adviser. He is a premier educationist, a sincere friend. DAP was the only friend who dispelled my loneliness by the intellectual deep friendship he provided. Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala was another saviour in this respect along with professors and high academics from foreign countries who visited Sarvodaya.

I get many invitations to deliver lectures at high academic gatherings. Texts of my speeches are requested. These prepared by me, finally I have always handed to DAP or Ratnapala for editing.

DAP is a scientist who looks at everything from the scientific perspective. Later he veered towards philosophy and Buddhism and habituated me too to view national and international issues from a perspective that had an amalgam of scientific and spiritual mental ethos.

There is a pronouncement that DAP is famous for i.e. that though he is a Buddhist by birth, studied in a Buddhist school and had studied Buddhism, that it was Sarvodaya who made Buddhism an integral part of his life. His dream is a new social order based on Buddhism.

I hope to maintain my friendship with DAP till my life lasts.

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Story of the barbed wire

Photo 221 -
Ven. Dr. Labuduwe
Siridhamma Thero

Every Sri Lankan is acquainted with Getambe Sri Rajopavanaramaya. Almost every vehicle is stopped there to place offerings.

The late Ven. Dr. Labuduwe Siridhamma Thero, Chief Incumbent of this temple was a very educated and disciplined monk. We have got his support for much of our work in Kandy and other areas. He was in the vanguard of the forces that opposed the rapid commercialisation of our society irrespective of its traditional values, a phenomenon that began after 1977.

This syndrome led to much evils as proliferation of taverns, moral decline etc. Sarvodaya began an earnest battle to combat this trend.

But the Getambe prelate was very vociferous in his protest and declared openly that His Excellency had turned a traitor to the nation he headed. His Excellency's immediate followers exaggerated his charge and finally the animosity ended up in putting up a barbed wire around the precincts of the Bodhi. The general public was helpless against the state thuggery.

News spread that the President was due to address a meeting at Pannala and would be paying his homage at Getambe shrine on the way. I sensed that trouble would brew. So I took the trouble of meeting him the day prior. But I learnt that he was spending the night on an estate of his at Giriulla. The informant, Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya gave me the address too. Unable to find a driver so early I drove my Peugeot car and starting at 4.30 a.m. reached Giriulla by about 6.30 a.m. in a heavy shower. The security officer inquired why I came and under his umbrella I went into the house. Dressed in his while kit HE asked me in English why I have come to meet him so early.

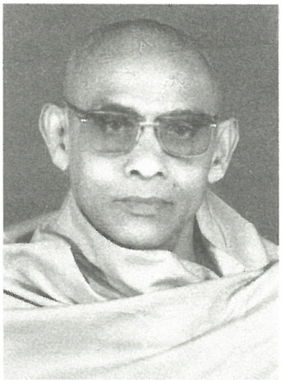

Photo 222
The present Chief Incumbent
Ven. Keppetiyagoda
Siriwimala Thera

'It is not a problem of mine, Sir, but yours'.

'What is my problem?'

'Today aren't you going to a meeting at Pannala?'

'Yes. Jayawickrema has arranged a meeting there'.

'On the way aren't you visiting the Getambe temple?'

'Yes'.

'I know that in your personal life, you are very religious. Sir, are you attending this Bodi Pooja in anger or in piety?'

He gave a sarcastic laugh and asked why I asked so.

Then he said 'Let us have breakfast and talk of that'.

'Sir, your followers instigated you against Siridhamma Thero over some statement of his. You fenced the Bodhi. Now this visit of yours would aggravate this inflammatory situation'.

The President said many things against the prelate, and I listened patiently. After that I said, 'I have known Siridhamma Thero for a very long time. He is a very pious, educated monk, deeply dedicated to the nation's welfare'.

'Then why does he talk politics?'

'That is the right of laymen and religious leaders, and it is not identifiable with politics. People can be very emotional in their declarations, but we must forgive them. At San Francisco you quoted Buddha's saying 'nahi verena verani' and asked that the Japanese be forgiven. Why don't you apply the same attitude in the case of Siridhamma Bhikkhu?'

The rain had lost its intensity. The breakfast comprising sambol, the white curry, string hoppers, toast bread, jam and butter too was getting depleted. HE got up and he took his cup of tea and left the table and I followed him.

'Now, Ariyaratne, what do you want me to do?'

'You can telephone Kandy and get the fence removed. Then in the evening when you go there, there will be no turmoil.'

'Only that?'

'No. At Pannala meeting you can announce that you have no hatred against Siri Dhamma Thero who called you a traitor. You can say I have already extended my compassion to him and instructed that the fence be removed. That would be enough. The respect due to you would increase'.

The President now looked mollified.

'Alright. Ariyaratne Thank you'. I saw him walking towards the telephone as I left. Not a drop of rain was falling now. I came back home.

After I came I phoned Dr. Weerasuriya who laughed and said 'Ari, you have conquered the boss'.

I said it is the Dhamma who has conquered him.

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The ceremony in the Fifth Studio of SLBC

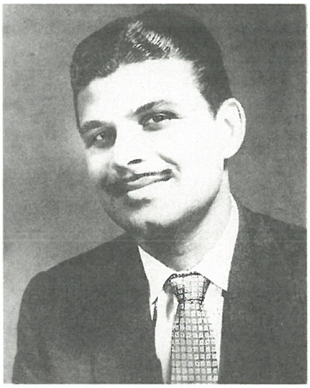

Photo 223 -
Mr. Karunaratne Abeysekera

Recently I got an invitation from the SLBC for a ceremony scheduled for June 3, 2002. I participated enthusiastically as the ceremony was held to open the 5th Studio to be named after a very experienced journalist cum poet commemorating him too by this opening. Hon. Imtias Bakeer Markar, the Media Minister was the Chief Guest. The ceremony itself epitomised the sweetness of the life of the departed artist by name Karunaratne Abeysekera, lyrist, poet, broadcaster and cricket commentator, who had earned the appreciative form of address, 'Karu aiya'. He was educated and socialised in Ananda and Nalanda colleges. Nineteen years have lapsed since his departure this year 2002. Still no one has filled that gap.

'A true artist is only born, never made'. He substantiated this statement. This is the diary entry I made the day he left us.

Karu aiya leaves us

The telephone rang on the morning of April 20, 1985. It was Mr. Dharma Gunesinghe, head of Nalanda and he said 'Sorrowful news' and went on to inform Karu aiya's death that dawn. Filled with anguish I immediately set out to his house in Maradana. Again I went in the evening and paid my respects.

I knew him even when he was living at his house. 'Sigiri' Maligakanda Road in Maradana. He was an extremely talented man in varied fields but his humanitarian qualities superceding all this earned my respect the most.

His parents, Podiappuhami Abeysekera and Premawathie Abeysekera had migrated from Matara to Colombo. They begot 8 sons and 2 daughters. Karu was the eldest and the second Premaratne after his diplomatic service was permanently resident in England. Gunaratne, next brother worked in the Inland Revenue Department, but died at 52 years. The others Gamini, Kirthi and Ranjith were also in diplomatic service abroad while Daya and Susantha are here. The two sisters Nita and Sujatha are business women and with their husbands pilot many a social service project. His wife Indira who shares the same birthday (June 3rd) with him and is almost equal to him in looks and talent, lives with her son, Dileepa lives in the house along the road now renamed Karunaratne Abeysekera Mawatha. At the ceremony Dileepa made the vote of thanks and he looked a re-incarnation of his father.

Eldest in such a large family, Karu chose to do a job to help the family even though he had passed his Advanced Level. The University admission letter and his appointment as a SLBC broadcaster were received the same day. He told his friends that a University career would help only himself but a job would help the whole family. It was after educating his younger siblings that he got married.

He had a very strong affinity to his alma mater, Nalanda and to all those connected to it. When speaking of Nalanda he always addresses it as 'Nalanda Mathawa' (Nalanda Mother). I had the good fortune to teach his younger brothers, who were clever and well disciplined boys. Today they are all in top rungs of professions not only here but abroad too and have done Nalanda College proud. Karu was responsible for it all.

I met Karu last at the beginning of 1983, before I was to go out of the country. As I was going along the corridor he suddenly emerged from a room dressed in a blue shirt and cream coloured trousers. He embraced me saying 'Ari' I am so proud of you. I have no words to describe my happiness'. His eyes were filled with tears. That was Karu.

Never could his voice again emanate from the SLBC. On Mr Sarath Wimalaweera's invitation I made a speech of appreciating Karu over the radio. Whoever could have imagined him born on June 3, 1930 departing this world at the age of 53 years!

May he attain Nibbana!

Once on some occasion he had sent me a poem. It ran as follows:

'To my dear Ari,
Brother, you are the uncrowned Prince of our forging kingdom.
Your fragrance spreads in all four directions
The fragrance of your life is alluring and noble.
Already you have entered our annals.
Yours affectionately,
Karunaratne Abeysekera

I sent him this poem, as a reply.
June 16, 1982

Jewel of kindness, you are a glimmer of courage, an ocean of pearls
Your head is placid, heart a lotus
An ocean fulfilling all my hopes and aspirations.
Your poem was a great encouragement, a comfort to me too.
The pious life you led is a crown
Topping society.

May Triple Gem Bless you!
Ari Malli

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Robert Parson, Saviour of Street Children

Photo 224 -
When Dr. Bob Parson visited the Street Children's Home

He was a great distinguished man, who played godfather to many helpless children not only here but all over the world. Parson first came here in 1980 as Area Director of the US Save the Children Programme. Though he helped children of all walks of life to the street children of Lanka his attention was gravitated after seeing their travails with his own eyes, according to what he told me.

Come sun, come rain, it only brought misery for these helpless kids who slept on pavements in chilly weather. In 1986 he put up child care centres in Colombo and Kandy with the partnership of Sarvodaya with whose work he had got impressed.

On May 7, 1987 he set up such a centre at Borella to provide shelters for these children, a shelter replete with all facilities. The simple ceremony of opening the centres was attended by him, Mrs. Padma Ranasinghe, Commissioner of Child Probation and myself and some other distinguished persons.

The venue begun with seven but increased to many and even changed the fortunes of their families to which some of the inmates were connected. Sarvodaya helped in the latter work too.

Parson patronised the services we began here via our nursery pre-school, day care centre and aligned educational and health services. Mrs. Sita Rajasuriya, then a Vice President of our Society invested much of her energy in this work and always encouraged us.

Such a venue then was duplicated in Kandy in July 1987. By 1990 the patronage extended by Save the Children Fund had dwindled while our role intensified.

Soon these services were being extended. As children of pre-school age had by now increased to 38, with the co-ordination of the Education Ministry. Literacy class was begun for these children when they reached the school-going age, to be eventually directed to formal schools.

Further steps were taken

- To provide houses for some of the aligned families
- To provide rented out houses

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SRI LANKA

Photo 225 -
Mrs. Amara Peiris,
President of Kulangana
Society, Dr. Bob Parson,
Mrs. Seetha Rajasuriya
and Mr.Tyrell Cooray

Photo 226 -
With Mrs Kusum Wijesinghe at the Street Children's Centre

Meanwhile Robert Parson left to his home country after his term of office and the initial agency that undertook this work slackened its attention. Now the Sarvodaya Kulagana Society (Women's Society) took on the responsibility of getting the help of Lankans. Mr. Tyrell Cooray was another who handled the awareness programme of this service but he too left the Save the Children Programme in 1991-92. Now the Hope for Children Organization came into the picture and Mr. Tyrell Cooray became the Lankan delegate of this, much to the fortune of our street children.

In 1995 Tyrell Cooray rendered much service to the Borella venue. Robert Parson made it a habit of coming every year to watch over the fortunes of our street children and also our role and always visited the Borella centre. On his visit in 1995 he was much pleased with the progress here.

Special tribute should be paid to Mrs. Kusum Wijesinghe who handled the full responsibility of the progress of looking after street children and their mothers. She was assisted by the Sarvodaya Women's Unit, the Suwesetha and other units of Sarvodaya. Tyrell Cooray and Robert Parson too earn our thanks. Tyrell Cooray is a retired Probation officer dedicated to the welfare of Helpless children. We recognised his services by conferring a Sarvodaya National award. Running day-care centre, pre-school, training courses in sewing, welding and educational trips comprise the programme here supplemented by Girl Guide activities.

Mr. Tyrell Cooray was instrumental in providing several equipment and uniforms to school-going children for 15 years. Allocations have been made to 12 rented houses while mothers and youth have been found some sort of employment. Some children we have helped are now in the University.

Now Kusum Wijesinghe Nangi is carrying the programme, but in its initial stages we did much work as the Shramadana camp at Wanathamulla to help slum populace. The main figure in this programme was Dr. Piyaratne, who then worked in the Health section of the Municipality, then earned a Doctorate and went on to work in the World Health Organisation in New Delhi. The other was Mr. Samarakoon who was also an officer in the Municipality. Both are now deceased and I remember them with gratitude.

Photo 227 -
Dr. Robert Parson delivering a lecture at Street Children's Centre

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To Batticaloa amidst turmoil

At the Executive Meeting held on July 27, 1985 Nalini Nangi said rather, sorrowfully 'Sir, you have not visited us for almost 3 years.' Instantly I took out my diary and made a note to visit Batticaloa between August 12th and 15th after my return from Hawaii. That is how I am here.

Neetha had developed an unjustified fear on 11th eve. I always acted on intuition springing from my heart. It is selfish people who give priority to logical thinking. But Neetha had done many things as telephoning ASP Ekanayake of Batticaloa and asking for news of the situation, refraining Piyasena from driving me by inciting his wife's reluctance, getting a crowd to meet me at Kandy through Sisira and informing Danny Dissanayake at Amparai. Because of this half an hour of my time was wasted. However, with Bandula I drove the vehicle and setting out at 7.00

Photo 228 -
Being received at Batticaloa centre by its officers

a.m. reached Padiyatalawe at 2 p.m. via Mahiyangana. We spent the night at Danny Dissanayake's place and through Kalmunai on the 13th we reached Saturukondan at about 7.15 a.m. where Sarvodaya farm and Training centre are sited.

By 10.00 a.m. about 2500 Sarvodaya Tamil Members, both young and old had congregated here. Among them were some Sinhalese from Jayanthipura too. Thimpu talks were getting much publicity in the media and the rumour that our movement too had become unpopular in the North was nullified by the vast crowd. Later I got to know that the militants too had come in sheep's clothing, but as I regard everybody as my brethern, I was not alarmed.

After the welcome I spoke for 2 hours and Nalini Nangi made an excellent translation of my speech. Their faces and later discussions transpired that I had addressed their heart.

It had the same effects as the speech I had made at Vavuniya last month. They had made security arrangements for my safety. But what is there to protect in this aggregate of the five elements comprising my body? Dammohave Rakkathi Dhammachari! (Those who live according to Dhamma are protected by it).

From 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. on August 14, I drove with Sam malli, Nalini nangi, Obeysekera, Revathan, Karunaratne and Bandula. Everybody listened to me.

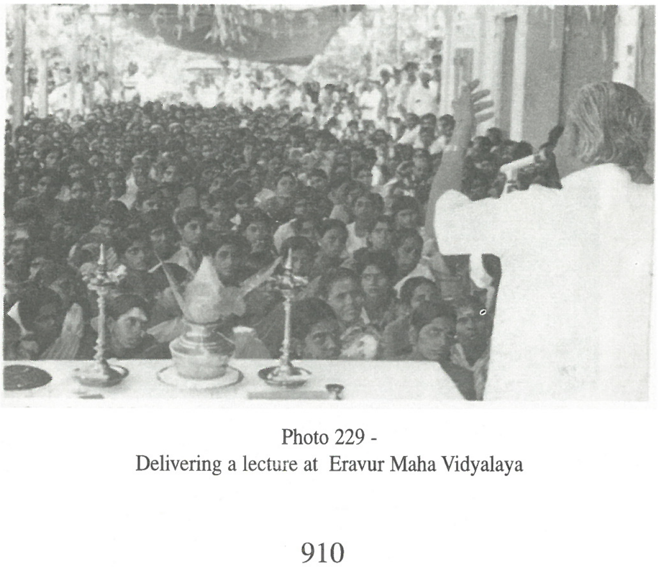

Photo 229 -
Delivering a lecture at Eravur Maha Vidyalaya

I had a one hour discussion with the Bishop of Batticaloa. He is a very broad minded person above religions and racial barriers. He asked me to summon a meeting at 6.00 p.m. that evening. The Government Agent Mr. Anthonymutthu, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission and Muslim Moulawis attended this meeting. They had one aim in mind – to rebuild the houses destroyed during the civil unrest. I explained the necessity of building a spiritual foundation for our nation and to focussing attention on a non-partisan political paradigm

I also delivered a lecture to the Muslim population at Eravur, that was aired over mikes and reached thousands of people. Nalini nangi again acted as the translator. Then we went to a village, where I was received warmly. Along a road that cut cross a thick jungle, I went to several villages and to Pattini Amma Kovil. I saw how commando fighters had made a debris of the houses of the innocent people and the kovil they worshipped in. Actually the Sinhalese should be ashamed of this chaos. I gave instructions to Sam malli to build these houses. I spoke consoling words to the poverty-ridden audience who neither wanted Eelam nor terrorism.

Photo 230 -
With the officers of Batticaloa Sarvodaya centre

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An exemplary Police Officer

Photo 231 -
SI Mr. G.J.E. Fernando receiving an award from HE President William Gopallawa

Sarvodaya worked initially in complete harmony with the Sri Lanka Police. The Inspector General of Police Osmund de Silva came to our first camp and encouraged us and Deputy Inspector General of Police Lambruggen too visited us and later it became the regular practice of Police officers to participate in our Shramadana work. This camaraderie helped both parties and bolstered the police duty of preserving law and order.

However, an episode enacted on August 22, 2002 at Kandy generated a disgust in me about the police, since they sided thugs against us. I saw the incident with my own eyes. This incident engendered in me a memory of a great Police officer. This chapter is allotted to him.

Geekiyanage Jonson Edwin Fernando was born on September 5, 1911 at Andiambalama in Minuwangoda. Having served the Police for 25 years he retired on September 5, 1971. He passed away on October 25, 1985 and we knew him as SI G.J.E. Fernando.

The Britishers in 1825 got down hired soldiers from Malaya (now Malaysia) and established a Police Force for their own protection. Later it developed into a Police Department and became a

Police service after we got our freedom. In the '50 decade began the habit of voluntary Grama Sevaka officers accompanying these police officers on their rounds. Though senior officers did not much condone this practice, they were unaware of its value.

According to hearsay, it was due to efforts of one Kadurugamuwa, a SI who was instrumental in developing the Grama Sevaka voluntary movement working in alliance with the Police, as a dynamic force. He began it in Kurunegala district and worked on the advice of Ven. Kalukondayawe Sri Praggnasekera Thero regarding this endeavour. Sarvodaya too lent a helping hand. Finally he ended up as a lecturer in Kalutara Police Training School. With the support of Mr. T.B. Werapitiya who worked as director of this school, he made Sarvodaya Shramadana, a component of Police training. I was invited to advice every trainee group and Mr. Werapitiya and the other Police officers too attended these sessions. This training that gathered steam in '60 decade was made almost integral. Mr. M.D.S. Gunatileke at the time became a Sergeant under Mr. G.J.E. Fernando, and SP Mr. Stanley Senanayake called the duo to Police Headquarters and launched a Public Relations Unit. Our Sarvodaya officers complemented this unit.

This Unit was first under the supervision of Police Superintendent Mr. D.H.R.A. Corea and its officers later increased to 8. Later it acquired a vehicle showing documentary films. They were shown to villagers in the night.

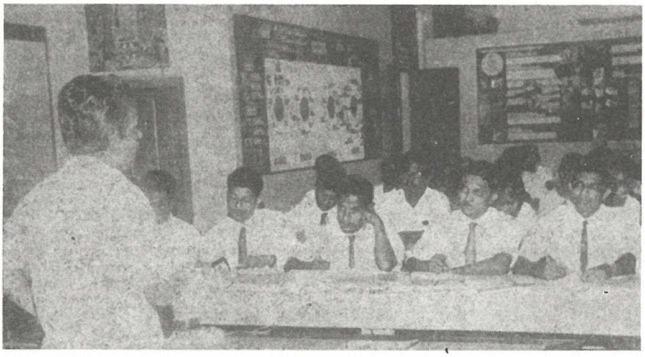

Photo 232 -
Delivering a lecture to a trainee Police group

Photo 233 -
SI Mr. M.D.S. Goonetileke

The Katukurunda Police Training ground spanned about 112 acres of land and Mr. Fernando began a coconut cultivation here. A paddy field was begun. At a shramadana held in Colombo, we planted coconut saplings too and they are now grown to trees. Later the Public Relations officers number rose to 150. Later S.I. Goonetileke began to pioneer a training programme for our audio-visual officers like Saliya Samarawickrema. When my life was under threat, that Mr. Goonetileke moved around me with a hidden revolver was news unfolded to me later.

After retirement Mr. G.J.E. Fernando, cultivated a model farm in Negombo and was awarded the title of 'Govi Raja' by Mr. Dudley Senanayake. Mr. Goonetileke too after retirement spearheaded many social activities and helped in Sarvodaya work. I feel the officers like this should have been nationally rewarded.

SI, G.J.E. Fernando's demise in itself was an example. He was 74 years and was making a speech at a wedding function.

A friend observing that Mr. Fernando looked exhausted asked him to shorten his speech. But he went on and ended his speech in this strain,

"I am not scared to die. I have paid my funeral expenses to Barney Raymond and they will attend to my funeral, my life has been a successful one."

He sat down after this and died. Mr. Fernando is a born Christian but the path he led was actually directed at Nirvana bliss. He is indeed an exemplary character who qualified for the Swarga Moksha of the Christians.

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A Buddhist Sermon at Christmas

Date - December 15, 1985. I was in New York scheduled to deliver a sermon in the largest church of this country St. John the Divine Cathedral. Besides the St. Peter's Church in Rome this is the world's biggest Christian church. Its construction had commenced last year only and only two-third is completed. Mr. Paul Morgan, who is interested in our movement along with Mr. Frank Wilson took me to see the church and the construction work still going on.

The whole edifice is built of granite and is redolent of all our ancient structures of the Anuradhapura period. Workers are busy putting out creations of rock manually and also by using machinery.

The large hall is thousands of feet in length and is equivalent to the size of two American football grounds. Height is about 200 feet. Various designs made of stained glass adorn the walls. As

Photo 234 -
At St. John's Church

these creations re-create the medieval art of Europe, it earns more respect while certain other factors supplement its hoary nature.

The church is open to devotees of any religion. Though it belongs officially to the Episcopal sect, even persons of other religions are invited to hold discourses and exhortations. Even Dalai Lama had made a speech here. There are chapels allotted for varied social service work. A special place exists to give blessings to those suffering from grave diseases as AIDS. Further Red Indian prisoners, blacks of South Africa too receive their blessings. Among its social service spectrum are included providing relief, to the houseless and jobless of New York.

Rt. Revd. Fr. Dean Morton, head of the church welcomed me with an embrace. Cannon Carson too welcomed me in this fashion. I was put on a red cloak ceremoniously and then led in a procession and after their prayers I had to get on to the rostrum. Fr. Morton welcomed me and said that hereafter Sarvodaya is an ally of their church and a brother. Cannon Carson got on from the other side and introduced me and asked me to answer the questions put to me in the context of my own religion.

I explained the Noble Eight-Fold Path expounded by Buddha for the salvation of humanity and the world. The audience listened with rapt attention. I too felt happy that I was diseminating the Buddha Dhamma from such a venue. Among the audience were our Ambassador Mr. Nissanka Wijewardene and his lady. After the ceremony many came and congratulated me. Later till 3.30 p.m. another ceremony was held in another hall. There Dean Morton, Frank Millspough, Mert Mason and I spoke. I gifted them a vessel encasing 3 leaves of the Sri Maha Bodhi and 3 Batik Murals depicting Buddha and Christ.

I felt that on these sacred grounds a firm foundation was laid for Sarvodaya in America. Many opined that it was a historical occasion. For me personally it was a triumphant event in my life.

It was a very cold evening when I disseminated Buddha's message to about 3000 people on a Christmas day. I am indeed fortunate and feel that I gathered much merit.

Later I partook in many religious seminars with Dean Morton and he became one of my life-long friends.

Kanakarajan Kadiramalai

Kanakarajan Kadiramalai is another hero who sacrificed his life for Sinhala-Tamil amity and peace in the island. The speech he made at the BMICH on October 2, 1983 endeared him to the audience as a true ambassador of peace.

Photo 235 -
At the conference on Peace &
Understanding held at the BMICH

Kadiramalai was an area officer of ours in the North. He resided at a house belonging to MP Mr. Sundaralingam sited close to Vavuniya camp and facing the main Jaffna-Vavuniya highway. Kadiramalai malli was born in September 5 in the village of Inuvil off Jaffna. His father, Mr. A. Kanakarajan was an estate Superintendent and mother was K. Kamalambikai. He had one elder brother. After getting through his General Arts Qualification Exam he joined Sarvodaya while residing in an ashram at Batticaloa in the 1978-79 period. He worked as an Udagam officer in 1980-81 and an Assistant District Co-ordinator of Vavuniya in 1982. In 1983 he was promoted to the Area Director of the North and Assistant Secretary post of Sarvodaya Movement

Kadiramalai malli took part in all Peace programmes launched at national and international levels. He established his District Centre at Rasavithottam in Jaffna and by 1986 had trained about 7300 service personnel there who were engaged in various relief work.

Photo 236 -
In Kilinochchi city

In 1984 the 24 year old Kadiramalai got married to Thirumathi of Satyasai Ashram in Bangalore and came to reside at the above Vavuniya house. A very devout Hindu, he avoided liquor and was a strict vegetarian and an exemplary youth leader.

A culvert near his house exploded due to some reason unexpectedly. The agitated army began shooting in all directions. Some army personnel came to Kadiramalai house and killed inmates but Kadiramalai was not at home. Another Sarvodaya worker S.K. Velauthapillai who was in charge of the Urutthrapuram Gandhi Nilayam ashram who had been there ran away and saved his life. Kadiramalai's pregnant wife and her parents were among the massacred.

Photo 237 -
At a meeting in Mulativu

It was a period when the President was about to proceed to Thimpu Talks i.e. July 1985. When I telephoned him he ordered the Air Force Chief to fly me to Vavuniya and soon by helicopter I was in Vavuniya. No traces of the murderers could be found. Kadiramalai was the only living person in the family and his sister-in-law's life was saved as she was studying in Madras. I made all arrangements to bury the dead.

An ahimsa-addict to the core Kadiramalai publicly proclaimed that he pardons the murderers of his family and went on with his work. The gold ornaments of his wife, he gave to us for safe-keeping, which we later gave to Subha, his sister-in-law. She is a teacher in Batticaloa, at present.

At the investigation into the murder, Kadiramalai proclaimed pardon for the murderers and said that the case need not be continued. He only wanted peace be maintained, said this great spiritual mentor. He himself pledged his future support to the cause.

However, I got him transferred from Vavuniya to Jaffna office when he and his assistants began distributing all the food, medicine and other goods sent to Jaffna for relief. Sarvodaya was the agency that handled the distribution of goods sent from Forut, Save the Children Fund, Helvetas etc. They had no branch organisations of their own in Jaffna.

In the second week of September 1986, Kadiramalai visited me at Moratuwa and went back upto Anuradhapura with me. He meditated with me at Sri Maha Bodhi for about an hour, got my blessings, after worshipping me and was about to go to Jaffna via Vavuniya when I asked him whether he has any trouble in Jaffna.

He replied that he is ready for any calamity and only his concern is to maintain national peace. I watched him driving away in the vehicle.

On September 19, 1986, I returned home after the Bandarawela Pada Yatra to be informed that Kadiramalai malli and M. Marikkar of Forut have been kidnapped by terrorists. Later Marikkar had been released. Immediately I informed the Indian High Commissioner Mr. J.N. Dixit about the incident. He told me that terrorist groups from India have arrived at Jaffna with their

Photo 238 -
With Kadiramalai in Jaffna

camps and equipment and the leaders are in India. So the only thing he could do, he said, was to send a telegram to India about this.

India or Bharatha Desha is the birth place of many world's great leaders as the Buddha, King Dharmasoka, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, but here is a tragic instance of this great country subordinating itself to the cruel spectre of terrorism. It seems as ready as any super power to extend its political hegemony, using any horrendous tactics.

I informed Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam, representative of the TULF, too who instructed me to proceed to India and meet the terrorist leaders there. Only a month ago Mr. Amirthalingam having decided to enter a truce had asked me whether Sarvodaya could help his party and this was the way they were acting when Kadiramalai's life was in danger.

On 17th September 1986, a 8 member group of EROS (Eelam Revoluntionary Movement) had come to the Jaffna district centre of Sarvodaya. Six persons in army uniform and two in white suits had first come to the centre and discontinued the telephones. When Jayarani nangi in the centre had started crying, they had threatened her, got the keys from her and thrown all files into their van. Then they had kidnapped Marikkar and Shanmugam

Photo 239 -
Peace Walk in Vavuniya

and fled. Then they had kidnapped Kadiramalai, detained him and cross-examined him. On 21st, Shanmugam was released but on the 26th at 10.45 a.m. Kadiramalai malli known as Gandhi of North Lanka had been hung on an electricity post in a junction of Jaffna and shot by terrorists. Then they had put the corpse in a box taken it to the cemetery at Kondavil and set fire to it.

That very night the terrorist who shot Kadiramalai had shot himself and committed suicide while another terrorist who had blamed the above man for the killing had bitten a cyanide capsule and killed himself. The murder of the Jaffna Sarvodaya head in Jaffna created a furore not only here but all over the world. All shops were closed in Jaffna to express their grief. Sinhala and Tamil newspapers gave extensive coverage to the brutal killings even writing editorials on it.

The ashes of Kadiramalai were handed by Sarvodaya members to his mother and Mr. S.K. Velauthapillai carried them to India and strewn them in Yamuna river.

EROS terrified by the fierce reaction of the Sinhalese and Tamils about the murder, publicised 5 reasons to justifying their action. We replied through media that all these reasons were ‘framed-up diabolical lies.’ I quote an extract from a letter written by Jayarani nangi to me.

Photo 240 -
At Vavuniya

'Kadir anna is a God. He is a God who helped the impoverished of Jaffna. I have even lost my faith in our benefactor gods who remain silent when such savants are murdered. He never stayed still and was an epitome of honesty and mercy. He considered you a god and discussed many a way of resurrecting Jaffna. All the charges of EROS are fabricated lies. When EROS came into the office on September 17, 1986 to kidnap him he whispered to me to hide the cheque books. I did that. He was more conscious of the resources of Sarvodaya than his own life.

At my life's risk, I will join the march that will be staged in September 29, 1986, protesting against this brutal act.'

Mr. S.P. Amarasingham, former media man and editor of Tribune, condemning the murder, said that this was an outstanding instance that heralded Sarvodaya's entry into national politics.

Right in the middle of Vavuniya town, a haven for terrorists at this time, with the aid of Ven. Siyambalagasvewa Wimalasara Thero, Sarvodaya deputy of Vavuniya, we held a massive peace march and a bhavana session. About 5,000 people joined it and demonstrated the aggregate people's power of Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.

Terrorists had so far targeted only government and the army. We worked neutrally and tried to diffuse the conflict only while working intensively for peace between the two factions. Meanwhile we went on with our allotted activity of developing self-sufficient Sarvodaya villages, organizing them through Sarvodaya units and co-ordinating them into a national fabric through provincial and district centres.

Though we went on very silently with the work, the popular response it gained was impressive causing jealousy among not only the terrorists but among a favoured few of both races.

The Christian clergy and Citizens Committees of Jaffna never ventured outside the city through fear. Their relief schemes and rehabilitation centres too linked the activities to a narrow terrain. When the north coast was declared 'taboo' to fishermen, it was the Jaffna Sarvodaya centre that distributed food to the fisher families there. The other groups without doing such welfare work, just served to articulate the atrocities perpetrated by the army. So the sincere worker, Kadiramalai malli no doubt was a thorn in their eyes. Still none of them have protested his murder.

There is no state control in Jaffna today other than army control. Hence an appeal to government to save Kadiramalai was not made by me to them, as it would have been fruitless. Later the government used the Kadiramalai incident to focus on the atrocities inflicted by terrorists and overlooked a most important message they could have conveyed.

The democracy in our country is a peculiar type. The ruling party reaches a concensus on all matters of importance, and they speak with one voice within and outside Parliament. But meet them individually and they have different viewpoints. This has led to a stalemate situation when broad-minded discussions on public issues give way to the super-imposing of the ideas of a narrow clique on the majority of the ruling party and finally becomes national policy.

From 1960 I have declared that what is manifest in our country today is but a party politics matrix. Now it has even plummeted to a mere 'cliquism'.

It was these priviledged 'cliques' who transformed a set of issues into national calamities culminating in a horrendous ethnic strife. Once they started the flames, they undertook the dousing too. Were the public strives to find some solution they immediately suppress it.

This is what happened to our Sarvodaya endeavour. But incidents like the murder of Kadiramalai could strive a beacon-light in this dismal frustrating path.

We organised a very successful Peace Walk and Bhavana in Vavuniya to condemn Kadiramalai's killing. I end this chapter by my reply to EROS on 'Why Kadiramalai was killed?' and the letter I wrote to the hero's mother.

With the help of the Rehabilitation Dept. Sarvodaya took measures to look after his mother.

Newspapers also spread the news of an organization named "Sathsarane" headed by Mr. Ravi Jayewardene. The news went on to say that I allied with it which is an absolute lie. I have no connections at all with "Sathsarane".

Another charge targeted at me was that I had settled Sinhala families in the Tamil village of 'Kappochchi.'

Anyone visiting Kappochchi could see it occupied by only 150 Tamil families and that no attempt has been made to build a Buddhist shrine there.

Sarvodaya functions however in 2000 Tamil villages of the North and East and also in 6000 Sinhala villages and also has about 600 venues in estate areas. It has spread its tentacles to 30 countries too. So we reject all man-made barriers.

The vicious circle perpetrating himsa through falsehood goes on. This devilish circle devours the innocent while the powerful clique escapes its clutches due to sheer power.

So Kadiramalai was not killed by one man. In fact that 'one man who killed him, killed himself.' Here is shown a strange dilemma that is that he was a mere tool of a vast revengeful force.

Sarvodaya however looked at the world from an egalitarian point of view. Killing its members does not strangle the movement. As regards this particular incident, the high personnel responsible for this could have easily contacted me in this age of high communications and verified the true facts. But they did not. If such a low premium is set on human values what can we expect from the present set up?

Another query surfaces here. Was there a faction jealous of the service rendered by Kadiramalai to the Tamil populace? His habit of distributing goods received equally may have provoked a clique used to exploitation. Later history would reveal true facts.

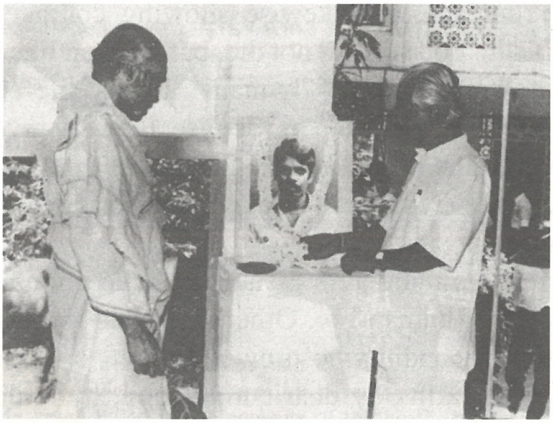

Photo 241 -
The Commemorative Ceremony held at Damsak Mandira

Refrain from himsa, refrain from untruth. Both these tools are used by exploiters and not by liberators.

Join Sarvodaya to amalgamate Dhamma Shakthi (energy of the Dhamma) and Jana Shakthi (Energy of the People) and let us build a new Lanka.

Who killed Kadiramalai? Not a human hand. But killed by the evil forces of falsehood, ignorance, deception and foolishness. So we forgive the killers.

This is the letter of condolence I sent to Sarvodaya worker Kadiramalai's mother.

Dear mother,

Twenty eight years ago you gave birth to a son, whom any country in the world will be proud of. It is the 7th day since he succumbed to a terrorist attack. Today on October 2, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, we are holding religious functions all over the country in memory of your great son.

To a child, his greatest treasure is his mother and to a mother, the greatest treasure is her child. Kadiramalai, your son, was no ordinary human. He had the compassion and understanding to pardon the murderers of his pregnant wife and her parents. He is on par with great humans like Swami Vivekananda, Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Jesus. Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus forgave their murderers. Your son did likewise showing courage before the Demon of Death. You son did not die, but lives on like a never fading light in generations of humans. If his life-extinguishers expected some objective from his demise, the very reverse process has taken place. The terrorists have fabricated a mass of lies about him and these lies are naturally linked to terror. Himsa or violence and lying are twin sins..

We view his murderers as fanatics who completely undermine the value of human life. Otherwise what motivates them to kill an avatar of Gandhi who provided relief to the helpless and downtrodden of Jaffna by distributing food, by building houses and through various other devices?

Himsa transforms the human into an animal. Avimsa (nonviolence) uplift the human into a god. Truth illumines the human life. Falsehood sinks him into dark chambers. Kadiramalai malli, an epitome of truth and ahimsa through his life-sacrifice shed a radiance on the whole world.

Friends of his, the world over, have sent condolence messages to me to be conveyed to you. Your son will live permanently in the hearts of all our Sarvodaya workers who will always emulate him.

So mother, please transform the anguish and sorrow felt by you, on your son's loss to a spiritual force and pray let all armed persons lay down their arms and join the peace process.

Signed
A. T. Ariyaratne
President, Sarvodaya
on behalf of all at Sarvodaya

Epilogue

"This is a novel of a new style."

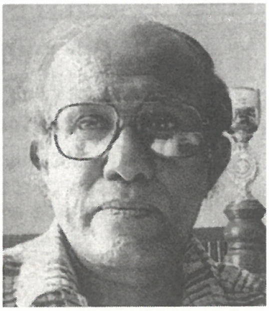

Photo 242 -
Prof. Sunanda Mahendra

That was the thought that occurred to me after reading the manuscript of the Second Volume of Bava Thanha.

Had Fyodor Dotrovosky lent ear to the unfolding of Sarvodaya events he would have penned a novel. I next mused.

"Why do you say that?"

"The author unfolds the characters he has met, and reveals their talents, their crafty traits with such acute observations."

"Only that?

"What a multitude of administrators, lawyers, police officers, businessmen, philanthropists, prelates, teachers, professors, industrialists and foreigners he has met.

Not only what they said and did. But he seems to be immune to their praise and insults.

What made him record all this?

For sensitive people who wished to present the different profiles of a social revolution no other alternative exists.

Cannot the records kept by those who seek to tread fresh paths be regarded invaluable legacies?

Isn't Sarvodaya leader recording unwritten history? That is true.

This is all what is happening all around us.

While many groan in deep sleep pundits have little sleep and invest their time doing worthwhile things. Thus Ariyaratne writing his Bhava Thanha keeps awake and moves with his colleagues. Sometimes he moves ahead. Sometimes he watches others moving. He is sensitive to their immaturity but has patience. Sometimes the natural human qualities of a Prathagjana (one who has not attained an arahathhood) surfaces. Then he tries to eliminate them.

We can see him bearing the brunt of work that only a group can handle. This very book, that qualifies for a collective endeavour has been handled by him alone and isn't that a patient, gigantic task in itself.

What does it teach us?

That Dr. Ariyaratne's lifestyle is indigenous to him alone. Those who identified his greatness are worthy of his honour. This gamut of experience that he reveals through this saga. I sensed it to be a spiritual pivotal syndrome that transcends a personal reflection.

Prof. Sunanda Mahendra,
Mass Communicating Faculty
Kelaniya University.

Bestowing Merit

With compassion I bestow merit on the following who helped in this work:

* To Prof. J.B. Dissanayake who wrote the Preface

* To Prof. Sunanda Mahendra responsible for the Epilogue

* To Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala who contributed the Felicitation

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* To Mr. Susiri de Silva who gave me all the encouragement to bring out the 2nd edition of Bhava Thanha and finally my thanks to the entire staff of Vishva Lekha who helped in many ways to get this book published

A. T. Ariyaratne

This is another milestone in Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne's life. One learns about his character which is like that of an aspirant to Buddhahood. His work portrayed here is very vivid. He is fulfilling one 'paramita' (determination) to Buddhahood – and that the firmness of mind. He accomplished all his work with a wonderful determination.

Although there are obstacles, his determination shows no lapse. When the entire central government was against him, he was endowed with this determination. Therefore very little harm was done to him. 'The Dharma protects the one who practices it.' – This word of the Buddha becomes clear in his case.

The philosophy which will be useful for the final release for man could be realized from this book. We are grateful for Dr. Ariyaratne for giving it to us.

Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala
24. 06. 2003

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